■ Sports
NBA Playoffs: Semis, Mavs, Pistons tie series

■ Across A17
Boracay in critical condition, says Durano

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Russian tycoon found guilty of theft, fraud, tax evasion

■ Business B1
4-month BOP surplus rises by 165% to $887M

■ News / A2
DOF files graft charges vs 2 sisters at Customs

Cigarette firm's top exec tells smokers: Kick habit

By Dennis Jay C. Santos
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—Still dying for a smoke? Tancel Yuvienco, chief executive officer of cigarette maker

CONTINUED ON A2

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, May 17, 2005 • 36 pages | vol. 20 / no. 155

Solons on 'jueteng' take, says ex-solon

Payoffs: P50,000 to P100,000 a month

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE PAYOLLS of "jueteng" lords include not only police officials, governors and mayors but lawmakers as well, according to a former Metro Manila lawmaker who told the Inquirer that he, too, had been on the take.

The politician, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that he and some of his colleagues in Luzon and Metro Manila in the 1990s had received payoffs ranging from P50,000 to P120,000 a month from financiers of the illegal numbers game.

"I have no reason [to conceal it]," the politician, who served more than one term in the House of Representatives, told the Inquirer.

The former congressman, who had retired to an unnamed but highly suitable source on the business, said he was willing to come out in the open again for fear of prosecution.

"If I come out, the focus would be on me. But I also want to let the people know that this is happening, and to confirm definitely ... [Ocampo's] allegations," he said.

CONTINUED A4

Pimentel, Lapid row stalls probe

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE RIFT between Senate Majority Leader Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. and Minority Leader Lito Lapid led to the deferment of the Senate inquiry into "jueteng" scandal for Wednesday.

In a working privilege speech, Senator Juan Ponce Enrile said the inquiry be delayed until Lapid, chair of the committee that will look into the proliferation of the illegal numbers racket in the country, was treated out of the investigations.

The majority leader defended the speech of his colleague, an actor and former governor of Pampanga, against Pimentel's appeal for his colleague himself to cut the inquiry.

Pimentel and Lapid had a heated exchange on the floor after the opposition leader formally questioned the executive administration senator's chances in presiding over the inquiry into jueteng operations and reports that three members of the government of Oriental were seeking $1 million of protection money.

"After hearing your tirades and [your] feigning tedium and fatigue,

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo consoles the widow of slain publisher Marlene Esperat before a ceremony at the PNP headquarters in Camp Crame. [Story on Page A3]

Get Esperat slay mastermind, GMA orders

By Armand Nocum and Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday gave the justice department the green light to go after the mastermind in the killing of journalist Marlene Esperat, whoever that personality is.

Ms Arroyo gave the order to acknowledge for the first time that the killing of members of the media had reached a "frightening" level.

Launching a P9-million presidential hotline, Ms Arroyo—in her strongest statement so far in the spate of media murders—vowed to go after the "cold-blooded" killers of journalists and said there was need "to turn the culture of violence around."

Speaking to reporters, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Ms Arroyo told him: "Go after whoever is involved, but there should be no witch hunt."

Gonzalez said he asked for Ms Arroyo's permission to proceed against those who might have ordered Esperat's killing regardless of their positions in government after the lawyer of the Esperat family told the President that the mastermind could be somebody "beyond" the level of two Department of Agriculture officials in Cotabato Maidanao who had been accused of involvement.

Gonzalez did not identify the lawyer.

He said the lawyer made the allegations during a meeting with

CONTINUED A3

Cops hunt 'assassin' in Tarlac

By Marjoe C. Ortiz
Manila

A SUSPECT in the murder of community newspaper publisher Philip Agustin said yesterday he was told Agustin must be killed because of his negative stories he had been writing about Mayor Eleanor Cuenca of Gerona, Tarlac.

Lakwen Reynaldo Orosio said he was instigated into joining the plot with Agustin by co-suspect Elio "Jr." Bonifacio Abrera—whom police had tagged as the alleged gunman

CONTINUED A3

Bomb sent to radioman kills boy

By PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—A bomb sent in a gift box to a radio announcer in Compostela Valley exploded, killing an 11-year-old boy and leaving three other persons, police said Monday.

The supposed target, Lucio Gonzales, who is also manager of Manila Broadcasting Co.'s Radyo Natin in Barangay Mt. Diwata in Maragusan town, said the attempt on his life was an offshoot of his campaign against illegal logging.

"I cannot be cowed by these lawless elements," said Gonzales.

CONTINUED A3

FOR AIDS VICTIMS
Bagnio City residents, led by Dr. Charito Chong, and employees of Ayala malls, light candles for AIDS fatalities in observance of the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial. [Story on Page A7.]

NEW PACIFIC WAR

Shattered dreams of the middle class

By Alexis Paya
Class of '94 pioneers

THE MTEF named "Broken Dreams" website holds the shattered hopes of 34,000 overseas workers, office clerks, government employees, businessmen, engineers, lawyers, journalists, teachers, accountants and others who had bought into the dreams being peddled by Danilo Maestre.

While their individual life stories may differ, their degree of suffering is similar because they all worked hard most of their lives toward one goal—to give their children the best education they could afford.

PFI plan holders said "broken dreams" accurately described the situation they were now facing after the pre-need company told them it did not have the money to pay for their children's tuition that offend year.

Many holders said they felt cheated because not only did the PFI reduce its countrywide appearance with them, it also acted with deceit in allegedly stripping the company of its assets to keep it out of the hands of PFI creditors, the plan holders.

SPECIAL REPORT
Project Editor: Leah Makabenta

Private Beneficiaries, a former financial analyst, has been battling breast cancer since 2000. Here she is fighting an untimely new battle.

"We bought these plots for our three children who are in college. It will be a real waste on our [account if we end up] not using them," Pacific Plans," she said, noting that she has to every cent to pay for her cancer treatment.

Beneficiaries had to stop down as president of Parents Stabilizing Pre-need Coalition (PSP Coalition), a lobby group formed by aggrieved PFI plan holders, because of her condition.

CONTINUED A7

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mostly cloudy skies with isolated rains and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rains or thunderstorms during the afternoon or evening.

CAMILLE T. ALEJO, Weather Specialist

Second FRONTPAGE

Metro Manila	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with rain
Baguio	Cloudy with rain	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with rain
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with rain	Davao	Cloudy with rain
Laoag	Cloudy with rain	Tacloban	Cloudy with rain
Legaspi	Cloudy with rain	Iloilo	Cloudy with rain
Puerto Princesa	Cloudy with rain	Bacolod	Cloudy with rain
Cebu	Partly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with rain
Dumaguete	Partly cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with rain

It's official: 2 sisters charged

By Nelson G. Flores

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance yesterday filed graft charges before the Ombudsman against two sisters working in the Bureau of Customs who allegedly amassed illegal wealth.

Charged in separate complaints with violations of Republic Act No. 1379 (the Ill-Gotten Wealth Law) were Ana Marie Concepcion Magbuang, customs operations officer in the Port of Manila at the South Harbor, and Marilda Concepcion Millare, special deputy collector at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

The DOF through the Revenue Integrity Protection Service (RIPS) asked the Ombudsman to confiscate the assets of Ms. Magbuang and Millare, particularly a Lexus and an Expedition SUV, the latest expensive models from what should be disposed of readily.

The RIPS is the DOF unit tasked with monitoring lifestyle checks on and filing graft charges against officials and employees of agencies under the department.

The DOF said Millare's Lexus and Magbuang's Expedition "should be susceptible to forfeiture and reversion proceedings" under RA 1379 and confiscated by the government when a civil case is eventually filed in court.

The DOF found that Ms. Magbuang owned a house and lot in Talon, Quezon City, against meager take in Zambales and Sorsogon, and a posh house at Valle Verde subdivision in Pasig City.

Ms. Magbuang, aside from the Lexus, a Mitsubishi Pajero, Toyota RAV4, Honda City, Nissan Frontis, Honda CRV, a speedboat and several trucks.

Millare owns an annual salary of P1,041,816, or almost P87,000 a month. She needs P6,240 a year when she joined the BOC as a customs inspector in 1989, RIPS said.

RIPS said some of the assets were not declared in Millare's statements of assets, liabilities and net worth, including the 2003 Pajero and the 2004 RAV-4, which were worth more than P1 million each.

The other assets were declared in her SALN, but her explanation of how she had acquired them was doubtful, the RIPS said.

Millare consistently declared the same liabilities in her SALNs from 1994 to 2003—a loan of P600,000 from Bank of the Philippine Islands, a loan of P370,000 from DBS Nasuly Bank, a loan of P1.25 million from Land Bank and two loans amounting to 4.25 million from Olympia Savings Bank, the RIPS said.

It noted that the liabilities Millare declared did not diminish even though she had supposedly paid them.

ANA Marie Concepcion Magbuang

MARILDA Concepcion Millare

Finance Undersecretary and BOC head Emmanuel Bonoan said in an interview he's also preparing for the prosecution of the sisters.

"They are facing a very long term in jail. And I am so certain the DOF has a good case," Bonoan said.

Meanwhile, one of the sisters, Magbuang, made herself scarce at her office at the Port Area yesterday.

Port co-workers said she did not report for work and no one could say when or if she was returning.

On the other hand, Millare showed up at her office at the Bureau but she had just stopped out when the interview called.

The BOC did not issue a statement about the sisters or the slapping of charges against them.

The Inquirer tried but failed to get in touch with Commissioner Alberto Lina who was reportedly in a meeting with other customs officials for most of the day yesterday. With Michelle F. Jamora and Leila B. Salaverria

11 colleges recall tuition hike bids; 205 schools seek fee raises

By Alexis Pope

ONE COULD just imagine students and their parents making a beeline for their schools.

Probably realizing that they were getting themselves beyond the reach of their students, 11 private colleges and universities have withdrawn their requests for tuition increases this school year, the Commission on Higher Education said yesterday.

The CHED identified the schools, mostly in the National Capital Region, as Adamson University, Asian College of Business and Technology with branches in Malolos, Cabanatuan City, Tarlac and Mandaluyong City; Capitol Medical Center Colleges, La Consolacion College in Caloocan, Manuel L. Quezon University, St. Joseph College in Quezon City, Manila Tytana's College and Trinitarian College.

Acting CHED chair Dr. Carlos Paner said the schools had applied to raise their tuition by as much as 21 percent.

"We are glad they withdrew their requests. We hope the others would follow after they realize they had overpriced their tuition," Paner said.

He said he was glad the schools decided not to increase their tuition ahead of the January 16 CHED order to new order virtually regulating the skyrocketing tuition.

Recently, the CHED said it would look into regulating runaway tuition and miscellaneous fees, students and their parents had complained that their schools were using their fees without consulting the public.

The CHED said schools should not raise their tuition beyond the current inflation rate in the country of 6.4 percent, unless the commission's approval. It said it would only grant tuition hikes to cover the inflation rate if the schools could justify the increase.

For school year 2005-06, the CHED said 205 of the 1,343 institutions of higher learning in the country had filed requests to raise their tuition by at least 042 per cent, which translates to a ramification of around 15 percent on the average. This is almost eight percentage points higher than the 6.4-percent inflation rate.

The new CHED rule would force schools to use tuition and miscellaneous fee increases and stipulates that the schools must first consult with the CHED on these petitions.

Dr. Alfred Vergara, CHED director for student services, said the number of higher education institutions asking for tuition increases this year was smaller compared to last year. He said this year, 11 percent of schools asked for an increase compared to 27 percent last year.

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Media moguls pitch in to help GMA repair image

By Cl C. Catacutan Jr.

EMBOLDENED over how the country's leading spin doctors, the Philippines' top media moguls will pitch in to help in President Macapagal-Arroyo's major image makeover.

Their main objective: To let the public know that the President had nothing to do with the high oil prices.

The media moguls, led by Antonio "Tony Boy" Cojuangco of ABC Broadcasting Corp., Eugenio Lopez III of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. and Felipe Gozon of GMA Broadcasting Corp., together with Inquirer Corp. chair Isabel Ongpin, Philippine Star's Augusto Dy, Malaya's Ed de Ayala, had a luncheon meeting with President Arroyo yesterday in Malacañang, where they pledged to support an aggressive information drive to be conducted by the Philippine Association of National Advertisers (PANA).

Ms. Arroyo had personally accepted the offer of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines to help her image by ensuring that the people were made aware of her successful projects and initiatives.

Lil Chua of PANA said the ad campaign aimed to "tell" to be major information networks and radio stations today to be followed by a series of paid ads in the daily newspapers.

In a statement issued by Malacañang, Chua said the "general objective of the campaign is to take the blame away from the government to the cause of the high cost of energy and educate the people) that this government had no direct control on the movement of oil prices dictated by the world market."

Chua urged advertisers to be "more adventurous" and help the government deliver the message of the ad campaign dubbed "Sulong ng Pilipino: Isang Bansang Sama-Sama Tayong."

For its part, Malacañang thanked the media moguls, who were described in the Malacañang statement as "executives of top advertising firms," for "their full support in the ongoing government campaign to educate the general public on the real reasons behind the astronomical price increases in the world market.

"I would like to thank all of you for being here today and for supporting me in this effort so that all of us can benefit from a better economy, and the rest of the Filipino people as well," the President said after the meeting attended also by Trade Secretary Juan Flavier.

Aside from Cojuangco, Lopez, Gozon and Isabel, also at the meeting were Lizares "Liza" Alejandro, Blue Ribbon, Emmanuel Ang, Johnny Cua, Jocelyn Campos-Ison, Carlos Encinas, Mabini Antonio, Rogelio Arevalo, Gerardo Ablaza, Cornelio Marquez, Roger Dallas, Pat Barreiro, Manuel Quisquis, Nic Gabonada, Tony Xenghah, Eric Canoy, Ilan Sua, Ernesto Gardeñas, Ador Perez, Emily Abrera, Mayuyong Ordoñez, Regina "Boy" Bingco, Rupert Alvarez, Augustus Nicdao, Hermenio Pineda, Bobby Barrera and Ramon Jose Fernandez.

Many Filipinos think AIDS is like malaria, health survey shows

By Christian V. Esguerra

MALARIA is or not, many Filipinos think that the AIDS virus is transmitted through mosquito bites and food sharing.

According to the National Demographic and Health Survey, only 26 percent of women and 30 percent of men shot down the idea that the deadly virus could be passed on through such modes.

That means majority of Filipinos are still at a loss on how the deadly disease is acquired. The Department of Health has described the AIDS cases in the country as "hidden and growing" in terms of number.

"Misconceptions about HIV/AIDS are universally borne out by many information people get from different sources," said Teresa Orate, executive director of the Commission on Population.

Citing a University of the Philippines study, Dr. Rodolfo Dolores of the Philippine Society of AIDS Council had earlier revealed that at least 23 percent of Filipinos aged between 15 and 24 believe they are "invincible" against the virus.

Almost 60 percent more believe there's more to it than HIV/AIDS as they have somehow become complacent in their sexual activities. Dolores told the Inquirer in an interview.

Orate warned of a "tsunami" of AIDS cases, unless Filipinos were and for all tackle the serious problem with "risk behaviors" such as unprotected sex and needle sharing among drug users.

"What we're saying for AIDS is an old rule before the 'amanos' when the rule remains and people are complacent, just heading to the coastline, playing, reminded of the danger," he said.

As of last March, the DOH has recorded a total 2,258 HIV positive cases. Of the number, 741 were overseas Filipino workers, mostly seafarers (466).

Distributed by Newspaper Direct

Sunday hottest day for Metro; storm threatens Visayas

By Blanche S. Rivera, *in Manila*, and Anselmo Roque, *PDI Central Luzon Desk*

METRO Manila suffered through its hottest day Sunday with the mercury soaring to 37.9 degrees Celsius at 2:45 p.m., breaking a four-year-old record, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said yesterday.

The Eastern Visayas, however, was warned to brace for a storm this week as tropical depression Crising headed for Leyte at 55 kph.

Pagasa weather forecasting chief Herman Ngohayon said Crising was moving too slowly to raise a storm signal.

"We only raised an alert because it's too slow, it's almost stationary and covers only a small area," Ngohayon said in a phone interview.

As of 10 a.m. yesterday, Crising was spotted north of Bicol and was 350-km east of southern Leyte. Crising could still weaken, Ngohayon said.

While the weather bureau predicted rain showers and thunderstorms in the Visayas and Mindanao, Luzon, particularly Cabanatuan City, continued to sizzle under temperatures that pushed beyond 39 degrees Celsius.

Pagasa said temperature readings showed the mercury rose to between 38 and 39.2 degrees Celsius in Cabanatuan beginning in April up to last week, making the city possibly the hottest in the country and among select Southeast Asian cities.

Dominador Campo, chief meteorological officer of Pagasa in Cabanatuan, said the temperature in the city shot up to 39.2 degrees Celsius on May 8. This, he said, was the highest temperature recorded this year in any city in the Philippines.

Campo said the city sweltered under 38-degree weather on April 12, April 27 and May 12.

As Cabanatuan suffered at 38 degrees on April 12 and 27, the cities of Tuguegarao and General Santos, and Saigon in Vietnam, experienced temperatures two degrees lower. These were the temperatures that came closest to Cabanatuan's on those days.

On May 12, the next hottest temperature reading—35 degrees Celsius—was recorded in Bangkok, Thailand; Hanoi, Vietnam, and Tuguegarao and Catbalogan in the Philippines.

On May 15, temperatures in Cabanatuan soared to 38.8 degrees.

Campo said Pagasa records indicated that Cabanatuan came close to beating the hottest-ever recorded temperature in the country.

This was on May 11, 2002, Campo said, when the city recorded a temperature of 40.4 degrees Celsius, a few notches below the 42.2 degrees experienced in Tuguegarao, Cagayan, on Aug. 29, 1912, and on May 11, 1969.

Asked why the city was experiencing such high temperatures, Campo could not give a ready answer.

But some residents said the burning of rice hay and stubble in farmlands around the city and other parts of Nueva Ecija may have contributed to the searing temperatures. They also blamed the thinning forest cover in the province.

The burning of rice hay and stubble in rice fields is a common practice of farmers to rid their farms of wastes that clog their plows when they cultivate the land.

The residents also noted that even in areas in Nueva Ecija where trees abound, temperatures were still high and caused discomfort to residents.

DNA tests finally confirm remains of Punongbayan

PUNONGBAYAN

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has finally identified the remains of Philippine National Red Cross governor Raymundo Punongbayan and his companions through DNA analysis weeks after the helicopter they were riding in crashed in Nueva Ecija.

NBI Forensic and Chemistry Division acting chief Idabel Pagulayan confirmed that the remains belonged to Punongbayan, geology division chief Dr. Norman Tungol, associate scientist Dr. Jessie Daligdig, science researchers Dindo Javier and Orlando Abengoza, co-pilot 1st Lt. Jason Salazar, and S/Sgt. Edgar Ramolete.

Pagulayan said the procedure entailed taking a swab of the inner cheeks of the victims' relatives and subjecting the samples to DNA analysis.

These were then matched with the DNA test results taken from the 11 bags that contained unidentified parts of the crash victims.

"Our funeral parlor in Rizal are now preparing the body parts so they could immediately be turned over to the families of the victims," Pagulayan said. ***Margaux C. Ortiz***

Suspect in mayor's slay turns out to be a 'she'

ONE of the male suspects earlier identified by witnesses in last week's killing of Sta. Rosa, Laguna Mayor Leon Arcillas turned out to be a woman, according to the National Bureau of Investigation.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said the policeman injured in the ensuing firefight between the mayor's bodyguards and the gunmen revealed that "the suspect was a lesbian."

"This witness identified the suspect in one of the photos shown to them and said she wore the same clothes as one of the gunmen," Wycoco said, pointing at the suspect who was wearing a red shirt in the photo.

The NBI director added, "This new information would greatly help in finding the suspects in the killing."

Wycoco said the injured policeman identified the woman as the one who wrestled with him when he tried to pull out a gun in an attempt to protect the mayor.

The NBI chief added that another man in the group shot Arcillas.

Police had earlier culled the photo from several photographs taken at the civil wedding that Arcillas officiated moments before he was gunned down at the hallway of the second floor of the new city hall.

Calabarzon police director Chief Supt. Jesus Versoza said the couples who were wed during the ceremonies forwarded the photographs to Task Force Arcillas. ***Margaux C. Ortiz***

REYNALDO Moreno, a suspect in the killing of Aurora publisher Philip Agustin, is presented to media by NBI officials. EDD GUMBAN

Cops hunt 'assassin' in Tarlac

Front page 1

and who was now being hunted in the mountains in Tarlac.

Speaking at a news conference with National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco, Reynaldo was asked by reporters if the mayor of Dingalan had ordered the killing of Agustin.

"I cannot answer that. It is Boyet who knows," Reynaldo said.

He said the killing of the publisher, who was gunned down on May 10 inside his daughter's home in Hingotan, was planned in "just one day" in a rented house.

Reynaldo, 38, said that Boyet, his first cousin, approached him before the assassination, asking about Agustin.

"He asked if I knew Agustin," Moreno said, speaking in Pilipino. He said Boyet was the one in direct contact with the mayor.

"Nung pinabili kong bfakeloo days ami ni Boyet ito Ambagan nang double si Agustin dahil meron si mayor dito at lagi akong nanino ('When I said that I have him, Boyet said, Agustin has to be hit because the mayor is mad at him he always smoking him')," Reynaldo said.

Reynaldo nodded when he was asked if it was true, as earlier stated by the NBI, that he was a lookout when Agustin was gunned down.

'Not me'

Tarlac has repeatedly denied involvement in the murder of Agustin, the latest victim in the growing list of slain Filipino media people. The killings have earned for the Philippines international condemnation as the most murderous country in the world for journalists.

Reynaldo said he, his cousin and Jet Jaw suspect Manuel Abbay were "on the payroll" of the mayor as construction laborers at the municipal hall.

"All of that is subject to verification," Wycoco said of Reynaldo's statements to media.

Asked if what Reynaldo had told reporters about why Agustin was killed was also corroborated by any statements he had given investigators, Wycoco said it was only at the news conference that the suspect had said those things.

"But it's good he said that because that is additional information to investigators," Wycoco said.

Gunman identified

"We will continue investigating the matter behind the case," Wycoco said. He said Boyet was last seen in Hermosa, Tarlac, on May 13.

Wycoco said Reynaldo had "positively identified Boyet as the one who actually shot Agustin."

Agustin, 54, a widower, was killed in Barangay Public just as he was preparing to eat dinner after 11 p.m.

"I did not know they will go through with the plan of killing Agustin," Moreno said, adding that he had not seen Boyet or Abby since the night of the incident.

Wycoco said Boyet was also allegedly behind the murder of a soldier and a policeman in Aurora a few years ago.

Who is Boyet?

Agustin's daughter Dingle, 27, said she believed that her father's articles about Tarlac had led to his death.

"Ever since my father came up with his articles, suspicious people had been spying on our house," Dingle tearfully said.

In his newsweekly's May 2-8 special edition, Agustin had exposed alleged anomalies involving Tarlac officials in a canning rigs, the slow disbursement of displaced families, the spending of P1.5 million for the rental of heavy equipment used in clearing the area around a privately owned cockpit, and the misdiagnosis of dengue cases that killed and landslide victims.

Agustin was carrying 300 copies of the special edition when he returned home in his hometown on May 10. He was shot dead hours that night.

Mountain chase

Threatened by heavy rains on Sunday, more than 60 policemen took advantage of a break in the weather and resumed their pursuit of Boyet Moreno and Abbay in a mountainous area said to be a communist rebel hot.

The police pursuers, who took off at 2 a.m., were focusing their search in the mountainous villages of Mayantoc, Tarlac, near the Zambales border, where the pair were last seen, said Senior Supt. Nestoreo Bilad, head of Task Force Agustin.

The troops on Sunday night called off their search after strong rains poured in the area.

The task force, comprising police and NBI operatives, scored an apparent breakthrough in the case on Saturday after they arrested Reynaldo.

3 witnesses

Three witnesses had claimed seeing Reynaldo, Boyet and Abbay at a videoke bar near the house where Agustin was shot.

Bilad said the trail led to Mayantoc after NBI agents received reports that the father of one of the Moreno and Abbay's brother-in-law were to deliver money to the suspects.

The father and the brother-in-law, Bilad said, were held for questioning and were taken to Mayantoc to lead authorities to the suspects' supposed hideout.

Abbay had supposedly stayed in the house of a certain Myra, his alleged former live-in partner, police said.

Bilad said Boyet and Abbay fled deeper into the mountain as troops approached, and police had blocked all possible exits. With a report from Dimitri Pavlou, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Cigarette . . .

Front page A2

Chris Nielsen, managing director of Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc., in advising smokers to kick the highly toxic habit.

"We've been clear and categorical. It's addictive and I believe that smoking can cause cancer," Nielsen told reporters during a visit here last week.

"Esep, Philip Morris is everywhere. You better stop," Nielsen advised smokers, particularly those "who think they have suffered illness as a result of using our products."

Philip Morris makes Marlboro, Philip Morris 1866, 1800 as well as local brands Bowling Gold, Miller, Hawk and Bowling Green.

Nielsen, an occasional smoker himself, said Philip Morris was not disputing scientific findings that the consumption of tobacco—whether in cigar or cigarette form—caused cancer and death.

Philip Morris is facing various lawsuits in the United States in connection with its alleged failure to inform consumers about the dangers of smoking.

Nielsen, however, said Philip Morris was not remiss in telling consumers about the ill effects of smoking on their health.

In fact, he said, Philip Morris has been waging a no-smoking campaign among the youth.

His company, he said, has also started pulling out its television and radio ads every if Republic Act No. 9211, otherwise known as the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003, had yet to fully take effect.

Nielsen seized support for RA 9211, saying it would make tobacco companies responsible and ensure that only adults had access to tobacco products.

Even if cigarettes were made available only to adults, Nielsen said tobacco companies would still earn a profit.

According to the Philip Morris official, 45 percent of the adult population in the Philippines are smokers.

Last year alone, Filipino smokers burned at least 90 billion sticks of cigarettes and the figure could still grow by 2 billion sticks over the next few years, he said.

A chain smoker, he pointed out, consumes two to three packs a day.

"The market is growing every year. It's such a vibrant industry here," Nielsen said.

Correction

IN MONDAY'S issue, a story on Page A7—"Youngest bishop installed"—misnamed the first name of the president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. The correct name of the CBCP president is Divine Archbishop Fernando—not Ramon—Capalla.

* * *

Readers may send their request for correction of factual errors in writing to Gary Lim, ed. editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Globe Bldg. corner Meralco Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Metro Manila, 1605; fax No. 897-4782; e-mail: cl@inquirer.com.ph; and duty@inquirer.com.ph.

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Cop asks TV firms, film makers to promote 'culture of peace'

By Luige A. del Puerto

"[WE] is an alternative [to the culture of vi. olence], and that is the culture of peace... The TV and film industry can do their part by not glorifying violence."

Mr. Red was not anti-gun advocate Randy Pacheco talking but a top official of the Philippine National Police.

Deputy Director General Nicasio de Leon, deputy chief for administration, yesterday called on TV networks and film makers to "stop glorifying violence" and institute a form of self-regulation in their ranks.

"One way of addressing this culture of violence is to have regulation... I think it's also [the] responsibility of our friends—in TV stations and in the cinema—not [to] glorify violence," De Leon said.

A prime example of this would be to stop crippling criminals by not turning their lives into movies that young people could emulate, he said.

"There are many ways we can resolve our problems. It's not an if because you are given or because some wrong was done to you, you already have the license to kill," De Leon said.

Pacheco has been trumpeting the anti-gun line since the 1980s.

In an interview last year, Pacheco lamented the gun industry had found a perfect ally in the film industry.

"We have to change our media culture, and movies have to stop glorifying the use of guns," Pacheco said. "Why do all cowboys have to be rewarded using guns, anyway?"

For Red part, he Leon said the police have started cracking down on loose and unlicensed firearms. Measures control over the importation and sale of guns, particularly high-powered ones, but also been put in place, he said.

"We are appealing to the media to help us. All of us should accept this responsibility and initiate action on this can be stopped," De Leon said.

Many things can be resolved through communication and people should learn to be calm, rather than be rash in their actions, he added.

"What people immediately think is to kill... Red is not right," he said.

5 NPA rebels killed in clashes in South

[illegible] communist rebels were killed and at least eight government soldiers were wounded in separate clashes in the South over the weekend, military officials said yesterday.

About 60 communist rebels on Sunday pounded a government detachment in Aga. san del Sur with rocket and mortar shells. The soldiers returned fire, killing three of the attackers, Army spokesman Maj. Ronilo [illegible] said.

A civilian, a soldier and a government militiaman also were wounded in the hour-long firefight.

In Tukdalan on Saturday, soldiers clashed with 70 communist New People's Army rebels in Bhutan town, killing two guerrillas. In routing a woman. Six soldiers were reported wounded in the clash.

The military has launched operations to track down the guerrillas, who retreated after the gunfights, officials said. AP

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Orlando Bloom as the perfect knight

FOR some years now, Orlando Bloom has been playing second-lead roles in major productions, biding his time before assuming his own stellar orbit. That golden time has come for Bloom by way of Ridley Scott's new epic, "Kingdom of Heaven," where the young actor plays a "lowly" blacksmith named Balian, who eventually becomes a knight, a lord, a Crusader, and then the Defender of Jerusalem.

The film begins in France in 1184, with Balian meeting his father, Baron Godfrey of Ibelin (Liam Neeson) for the first time. Godfrey

ORLANDO Bloom

examples to bring Godfrey's initially reluctant if legitimate son to Jerusalem, which Arab leader Saladin is planning to reclaim from the Christian Crusaders.

Some leaders of the Christian forces are sooo-evil and their vow, extemporizes editor, as the hardened against them—resistance into the long days of Jerusalem. It's a good thing that under the tutelage of his father, Balian has become the perfect knight and leader whom, seeking reasonable motivation for men to become more courageous than they ever thought they could be.

So (she improvises Salahuddin himself, who wants to be remembered for victory, just as Balian has proven himself triumphant in defeat.

Scott's film is full of such provocative issues, dense and seeming contradictions, like the conflict between service to God and some Crusaders' lust for money and power.

But, unlike most of Scott's other films, Balian's principles remain steadfast, and this provides the epic production with the heroic stature it needs in this to its appropriately inspiring climax.

To be sure, the story of the Crusades is too complex to be adequately dealt with in this feature film's running time of a little over two hours.

Some key developments and historical eras, sections are glossed over, and fiction plot inventions like a romance between Balian and Arab princess Sibylla provide more distractions.

All told, however, the film is eminently viewable for its insights into human nature, its suspenseful and yet detailed battle sequences, and its emphatically emotional approach, which makes the production much more than just a parade-of-costumes, historical set piece.

As for Bloom, he may not be as physically compelling as some other leads of action epics, but his innate sensitivity serves his "perfect knight" character well. It betrays Balian with the nobility of spirit that is his birthright, and the thematic jewel in the film's many-splendored crown.

'Monkey Business 7'

UNTIL May 9, "Monkey Business 7" started airing on Animal Planet at 5:30 p.m. The seventh season of the popular show on the day-to-day lives of apes and monkeys offers three new features.

Today at 5:30 p.m., Episode 6: Chimp youngsters Ben and Pip leave the big outdoors. Human interpreters get the chimpanzees excited, but the orangutans take it in stride. Viewers catch up with newborn chimp Simon and white-faced Alfred. 6,000 miles away in Cambodia.

Tomorrow: Episode 7: In Cambodia, Jim and Alison Mond work to investigate reports of gibbons being illegally held as floating zoos. Home to Dover, Spanish chimp Alberto craves another member of the bachelor boys. The nickname of four-year-old chimp Ashed's operation is revealed. And there's medical concern over three-year-old Tutu.

Nickelodeon Networks was awarded eight Beacon awards, more than any other network, for its pro-social campaigns. Sponsored by the Cable Television Public Affairs Association (CTPAA), the Beacon Awards competition recognizes excellence in public affairs throughout the cable industry.

In particular, Nickelodeon's "Let's Just Play" won four Beacon Awards, and was also a 2005 Golden Beacon Award Finalist. Other awards were for Nick Mag TV Land and, from the N, "A Walk to Your Shoes: Living with a Mr. MEE" and "I Sit Where I Want: The Legacy of Stereo vs Board of Education."

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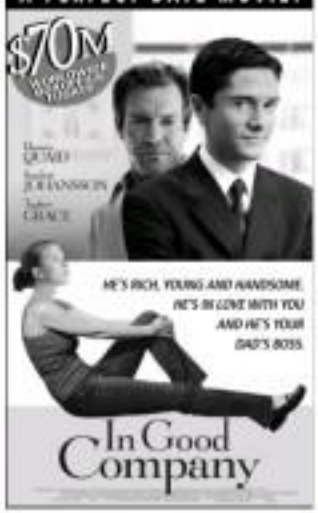


MTRCB R-13

The Film that Terrified Manila!

NOW SHOWING

THE FIRST FULLY DOCUMENTED CASE OF DEMONIC POSSESSION

Shattered dreams ...

From page A1

Joji Ugnano is the mother of twins who are to start college this year. You might say she is entering a "double adventure" from PFI.

"I am really worried and angry. This should not be happening. We bought the plan at the strength of its [PFI's] name. These savers have moved savings and we have sacrificed so much just to be able to pay off the plans of these years," she said.

Theoharis Contreras is concerned about the two children of his sister who is working in Dubai. Her sister is a soldier who is banking on the education plan to fund her children's schooling.

Carmen Lim, 61, a widow from Sampaloc, Manila, retired from her job as a piano teacher. To her, PFI plans are the thoughts on her two children's only hope for a future.

"Right now, I have no source of income because I am already a senior citizen," she said.

Glen Salve, 30, a teacher from Bacoor, Cavite, is a former aide again for OFW and ex-jitney holder Ben Tan who used her children's education and for the other parents in the same situation.

"My integrity as an agent is also affected. I am committed to giving good service to my clients because that is my job. How can I expect all of this to my clients?" said Salve.

Of PFI's 194,000 plan holders, about 10,000 have filed educational claims against PFI this school year.

Rehabilitation plan

Its rehabilitation plan that it presented to and approved by the Makati Regional Trial Court, PFI offered to return in 2018 the full amount of the plans still held by plan holders, plus interest of 7 percent each year until 2030.

For plan holders opting to avail themselves of their plans now, PFI offered to give them from PT 5000 to P50,000 in tuition support in the coming school year.

On April 13, Judge Nonito Barza issued a stay order that effectively bars all PFI payments to creditors, suppliers and plan holders until the arrangement is established.

He accepted PFI's claim that while it had only a liquidity problem, that it had enough assets to its near hand...about P30 million of government guaranteed National Power Corp. bonds maturing in 2010—to pay back its plan holders.

The problem is that liquidating these assets would severely erode plan holders' claims is not a viable option at this time because of unfavorable market conditions, according to the PFI.

The judge allowed the company to use P500 million of company funds to pay for partial tuition support to those plan holders who finish classes this coming school year.

Yuchengco's loan

On May 13, the Yuchengco family patriarch, Alfonso Yuchengco, extended a P500-million loan to the company, bringing the funds available for tuition support this year to P971 million, said PFI president Ernest Garcia.

PFI said it had pegged a tuition support ceiling of P22,000 per semester for those enrolled in non-exclusive schools and P50,000 for those in exclusive schools.

But PFI plan holders interviewed by the Inquirer were unimpressed.

They said the amounts were very small and they were still faced with the basic question: Where will they get the money to pay for their children's tuition in the coming school year? They cannot wait for 2018 to get the money.

"It all really boils down to this. PFI broke the contract, not us. We faithfully paid for these plans through my means we could. And now they are telling us they can't meet their part of the contract?" said PFI president Philip Pavia.

He faulted the PFI management for not preparing for the inevitable deregulation of tuition, which had been foreshadowed by the passage of the Education Act of 1982.

"They should have seen this deregulation was already coming. Yet they didn't do anything," Pavia said.

Pangilinan's call for probe

To this, he has an ally in Sen. Francis Pangilinan, who has filed a resolution calling for a Senate investigation of Pacific Plans.

"PFI cannot continue to blame the country's tuition deregulation law for their financial travails. What has Pacific Plans done with the money of these plan holders? Where have they invested them? They owe the public an explanation," he said.

Sen. Manuel Roxas II and Senate President Franklin Drilon have filed separate bills to regulate the industry in the House. Rep. Jack Enrile wrote a bill proposing a code for the pre-need industry, similar to the Insurance Code.

Sen. Sergio Osmeña III has filed a bill prescribing criminal penalties for any person refusing to settle any claim for loss or damage for which an insurer may be liable.

SEC's second look

The Securities and Exchange Commission's reported decision to take a position in the rehabilitation hearings as the industry regulator was a good break, said industry analysts.

Some lawyers said its move to "take a second look at the company's finances," SEC secretary Lucrecio Lubben has said.

"We are doing this both for the information of the court and to learn from the experience also. We are trying to see where we went wrong," he said.

And the SEC cannot do anything until the court takes on the issue, according to Lubben.

"The proper venue to seek redress is [the] court. So far, what has been aired are only allegations. There is nothing conclusive," he said.

Hearing has scheduled for May 20 the first hearing on the case and the PEP Coalition is proposing protest actions in front of the court building.

Yuchengco lauded for forking over ₱250M

BETTOM, prominent personalities in the business and public service sectors have expressed confidence that Pacific Plans Inc. (PPI), under the leadership of former Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco, would be able to overcome the financial crisis that the pre-need firm is experiencing.

Former Senate President Jovito Salonga said Yuchengco had demonstrated the values of honesty, integrity and patriotism, which have become his by linking over P250 million from his own pocket to help resolve the PPI financial problem.

"I have known Ambassador Yuchengco for many years, particularly of his unselfish service to the nation in various capacities, and his participating this crucial point of martial rule," Salonga said in a statement.

Manolo Cuelho, chair of the Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI), described Yuchengco as "a living testament to the ideals of FPI."

Carlos said Yuchengco had long pursued with FPI members his thesis of promoting competitive and socially conscious Philippine business enterprises.

"We considered Ambassador Yuchengco for directing his persons of business interests in line with what is good for the nation in the long term," he said.

Ambassador Jose Rhoeda Laurel IV, whose family owns interests of the Philippines, believed that Yuchengco was being true to himself when he raised P250 million from his own resources in support of PPI.

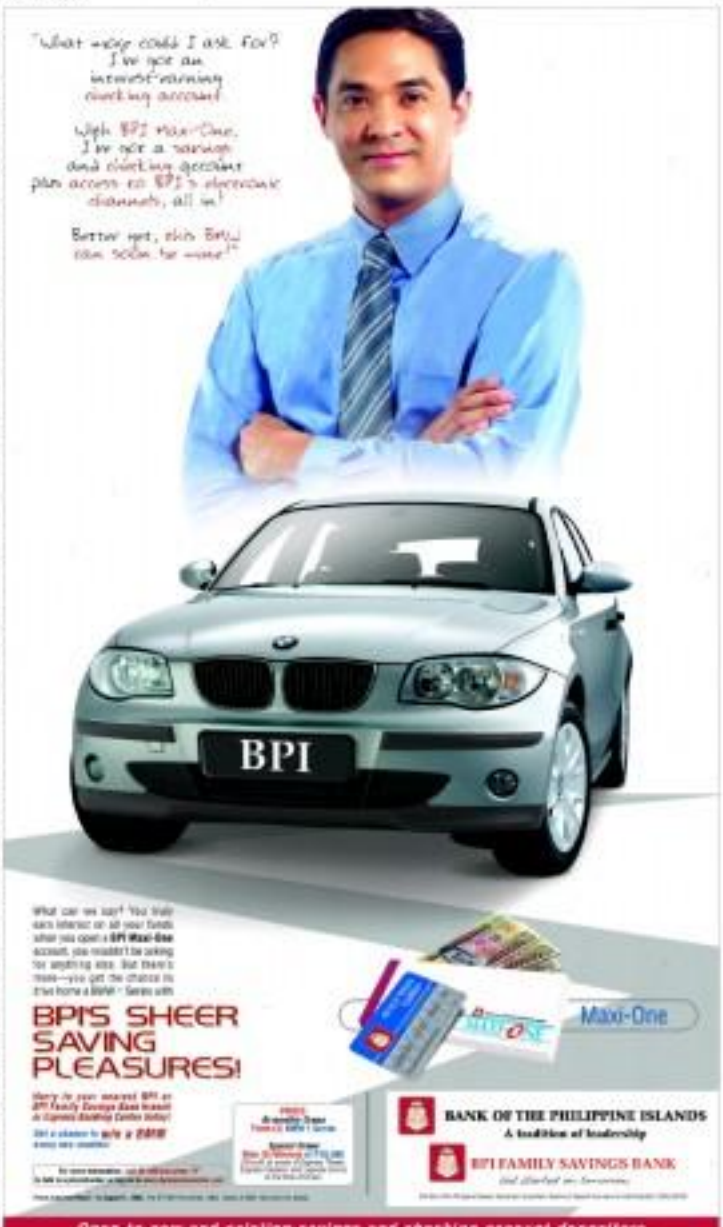
"The will open behind a decade of firm leadership has earned him (Yuchengco) the respect of his colleagues in the diplomatic world. He is known to be a fair and just man. I believe him also for his high regard for education and for instilling good values among the youth," Laurel said.

Former Education Secretary Andrew Gonzalez said that "to raising P250 million from his personal resources to alleviate the plight of [PPI] parents with various problems, Ambassador Yuchengco certainly proved his commitment to serve the public unselfishly."

Moreover, Gonzalez said that "while it is a corporate matter that PPI should resolve, for [Yuchengco] went beyond the call of obligation to help plan holders cope with their children's school requirements."

"We both share the same high regard for education and I believe this is his way of showing it," he said.

Manila Japanese president Pablo Carlos III praised Yuchengco for his unselfish contributions as a major donor to the Bluand Senior of Columbia Humanitarian Awards Branch since 1981.



Solons on 'jueteng' take, says ex-solon

Front page A1

Cruz, the Lingayen-Dagupan archbishop, earlier said the jueteng racket that brought down the administration of President Joseph Estrada in 2001 had originated during the term of President Fidel Ramos.

The former congressman disclosed the names of his House colleagues who allegedly received payoffs from jueteng operators. Some of these lawmakers are still in Congress, he said.

The Inquirer source, however, requested that the names of his colleagues be withheld because there was no hard evidence to pin them down.

"There is never any evidence lines," the ex-congressman said, referring the statement of Cruz when lawmakers demanded solid proof from the archbishop.

The Inquirer source claimed that he was close to a powerful jueteng lord who was killed after he was ordered by this group to move to his province.

A number of lawmakers demanded an investigation of President Joseph Estrada in 2001 but Congress, during the term of President Fidel Ramos, ignored them.

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Crisp bills

Most of the time, the payoffs would be delivered in crisp bills straight from a bank every 15 days. "You could even read the bank's name on the paper used to wrap the money. It's new," he said.

This system, which had been in place even before the Estrada years, incensed allies, lawmakers smart to this day. The system, sources said, he learned about the fees his dealings with the jueteng lord.

The source said the payoffs stopped for only a month after Estrada was deposed in 2001.

Asked to comment on these claims, another former congressman told the Inquirer that he found the allegations incredible, saying that he never received payoffs nor was he ever approached by a jueteng lord during his term.

Even so, the Inquirer source said the biggest payoffs usually went to mayors in Metro Manila because they were in a position to protect jueteng operations.

At least one ranking police official could not be reached for comment.

"I've been a police official for a long time," the police official told the Inquirer. "What I know is that there is a meeting in the LCIU (local government unit) office. I may tell you to take among the local officials had chosen to receive it."

The Inquirer source said he and his fellow lawmakers would talk about the jueteng payola at informal meetings in "cubicle bars and golf courses."

"It's an open secret," he said. "That is why nothing will come out of the jueteng inquiry in Congress."

On top of their monthly payoff called "family ligaman," some congressmen also received money for "special occasions" like birthdays in Cebu, according to the source.

"Sometimes, you'll be surprised that the money was bigger on a certain month. Then you realize that a fiesta is coming and that explains the increase," the source said.

Lawmakers use the payoffs to buy trophies or medals for football tournaments or to help cash-strapped municipalities in the provinces, the source said.

In his case, the source said he used the monthly payoffs during "people's day," when scores of poor constituents would come knocking on his door for some cash or free medicines, doctors and other needs.

According to the ex-congressman, the son of the enemy went to "IEC...about Go kasi (wording), Arroyo (inaudible), Hong Kong(inaudible), the staff of patronage politics.

"It was easy to rationalize," he said, when asked if he felt guilty about accepting the bribes. "The money sets gone in two to three weeks anyway."

'Better'

What makes the jueteng payoff "better" is that an official need not go through all the hassle of having to take a cut from an infrastructure project, the other source of cash for congressmen.

"Besides nothing, you have to secure the funding first [for the project] and it takes a long time for it to be released. In jueteng, you have just to secure it," he said.

The source said that when he first became a congressman in the 1990s, it was a "table manager" who apprended him and offered him cash. A table manager supervises jueteng operations in a town's area. Most of the time, a jueteng lord is merely the financier.

The source said he did not accept it because he was in doubt if all the money would reach the people's pockets.

"It was never late," he said.

He said some congressmen also asked the gambling lord for allowances for their trips abroad. The jueteng lord at times gave as much as $1,000, according to the source.

He said nothing would come out of the current congressional inquiry into jueteng.

"There have been many jueteng inquiries in the past, but nothing came out of it. As to the past, nothing will come out of it now," the source said.

Governor, archbishop on 'hit' list, says Imee

By Michael Lim Ubac

If GOOD Scout flip-flopper Imee Marcos is to be believed, Isabela Governor Faustino "Junior" Dy III and Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz are now on an assassin's hit list.

Marcos yesterday said there was an indication that "a group of professional assassins" had been tapped by gambling lords to "solve" the governor and the bishop, both of whom have spoken openly against "jueteng" operations in northern Luzon.

"The stakes are getting higher day by day and I'm sure Archbishop Oscar and Governor Junior realize that they have put their lives on the line when they started this campaign," said the daughter of Batasan Pambansa Floirendo Marcos.

Representative Marcos urged Cruz and Dy Junior to take precautionary measures to "big jueteng operators are bound to launch a counter-attack against those who have to consider."

The lawmaker, however, refused to identify the jueteng lords, or give the names of her sources.

Cruz claimed that jueteng had protected under the wings of administration, while Dy said that most of the lotteries owners and police officials were on the take.

Pillers contacted by the Inquirer through her mobile phone, Father Jerry Orbos said in a "few months."

"Even during the last (gubernatorial) election, I was not afraid of death threats because politicians think that of the consequences of their actions," she said.

But when jueteng lords are involved, "we might be a different story because all they're after is to protect their pasos."

Fr. Orbos is now observing security precautions, allowing a back-up vehicle to follow her car wherever she moves around.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo witnesses the signing of a P1-million "pa-un-lovelove" fund by (from left) Ateneo Bureau of the National Press Club, Spectator Jose de Venecia, Inday Espina-Varona of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines and Jose Pinto of the Philippine Press Institute. [illegible]

Pimentel, Lapid . . .

Front page A1

Dan you referring to me or are you the only one with clean hands?" said Lapid, harping on the parliamentary rule of addressing his statements to Senate President Franklin Drilon, who was presiding over the session.

Lapid asked if Pimentel was alluding to his nonexistent assets, which Senator Ralph Recto and Senator Manuel Villar Jr. and Senator Serge Osmeña III and Senator Sotto.

"Who is that someone with clean hands you are referring to that should handle the investigation for?" Lapid, chair of the committee on games, amusements and sports, asked the senator.

"I said you should not handle the probe. If you don't get it, I don't know how I would explain it," Pimentel said.

Pimentel questioned Lapid's ability to handling the investigation, saying he once [illegible] Pampanga which Pimentel had described as the "Vatican of jueteng."

Pimentel also said politics might taint the inquiry, alluding to Lapid's being in 40's and position mate of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Senate husband and son were being linked to jueteng.

In his opening remarks, Pimentel said he was willing to [illegible] Lapid to inhibit himself on his probe. [illegible] Pimentel explained because he had "provided proof that he acted for the [illegible] investigation lies with the truth to worst out."

Lapid clears Pineda

"For one thing, let me absolve Bong Pineda, who everyone in Pampanga and in Central Luzon, including the archbishop of Lingayen, says is involved in the operation of jueteng," the minority leader said.

How he [Lapid's] one, the investigation in Pampanga has to conduct proper if the provinces to be invited to the hearings, Pimentel added.

"Now, under the circumstances, the chair will handle the investigation with clean hands recognized," he said.

The congressional floor options to ensure that Lapid would not preside over the inquiry.

Pimentel proposed that the committee on public order and illegal gangs headed by administration Senator Manuel Villar be designated the lead committee, or that the Senate hold a joint inquiry with the House of Representatives because of the gravity of the jueteng problem.

If Lapid insists but still, Pimentel suggested that Lapid's vice chair, Ilocos Sur Rep. Eric, also not chair the committee.

Pimentel asked that the hearings scheduled on Wednesday be moved to allow the senators to find another chair.

Names of jueteng lords

"I would like the chairman of the jueteng lords revealed and then prosecuted. I would like to know the amount of bribe money that pass from the jueteng lords to this bribers. I want the overall issue that jueteng brings to the nation and our people revealed. And I want to find out also what we can do about it as legislators," Pimentel said.

The expected output, will not be achieved unless the chair inhibits himself or unless the committee on public order and illegal gangs is headed by a lead Committee of the jueteng probe, he said.

Lapid denied that he had donated Pineda, known to be one of the biggest jueteng lords in Central Luzon. He said Pineda was just an acquaintance.

Lapid said the million dollar funds are subdivided to [illegible] Pineda's motion to invite Villar's committee the lead body was issued.

Drilon suggested that Lapid's and Villar's committees hold a joint hearing as a compromise.

He said Lapid and Villar would have co-chairs of the hearings.

The Senate President said the committees could come up with one or separate reports after the hearing. "It's up to the chairmen to decide [which report is adopted," Drilon said.

Get Esperat slay mastermind, GMA orders

Front page A1

the children and relatives of Esperat in Maharlika yesterday.

Ms. Bennet told Mr. Arroyo that the 58 cases Esperat had filed against several officials—including several members of the Cabinet and two congressmen—could be the key to unmasking the mastermind, Esperat said.

Drilon, sure of the hour supposed sentiments of Esperat alleged that Ilocos Governors and Zaldy Solon, regional finance officer and accountant of the BA office in Region 12 (Soccsksargen), respectively, had financed the killing.

"I thought it confirmed that it does not stop there," Gonzales said.

Both Mendiola and Solon deny the involvement.

Evidence needed

But he said that the DOJ has to establish the link, in any other of those who might be involved.

"In effect, the President has given the go-signal to go against those who involved," he said.

Asked whether this would be members of the Cabinet, Gonzales replied: "Ah will go as far as anybody if there is evidence."

Asked again by reporters if he was referring to agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, the highest official in the department, Gonzales answered with a smile: "That can be a witch-hunt already."

Gonzales said he was not pin-pointing responsibility to anybody but just until he receives copies of the case Esperat filed in the Office of the Ombudsman.

Graft charges

He said Esperat's lawyers had promised to furnish him the documents.

Two hours after the interview, confirming the implications of what he had said, Gonzales instructed a press official to say that he was not going to say another of the Cabinet as the possible mastermind.

Among those Esperat charged with graft were Enrique del Rosario, Procopio Pichay, Agriculture Undersecretary Cesar Libon—brother of Senate President Franklin Drilon—and a host of other ranking BA officials for the alleged smuggling of P27 million worth of chicken leg quarters from the United States last year.

Pichay and Libon have denied the charges.

Esperat's lawyer also filed a graft complaint against Yap, former Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante and several others in relation to alleged irregularities in a P432-million fertilizer deal in 2003.

Charges denied

Both Yap and Bolante also denied the charges.

In October 2003, Esperat also filed a complaint against Mindanao Deputy Ombudsman Antonio Odtuhan for allegedly failing to act on criminal charges in Central Mindanao.

She also accused former Rep. Jaime Mendiola of irregularities.

Esperat also accused Senate officials, specifically director for Central Mindanao, of the theft of gasoline, resulting in their dismissal from the service.

Gonzales said Mr. Arroyo had also asked him to study the arrest of Drilon and Libon, after they failed to appear in a preliminary investigation of their cases at the DOJ.

Justice urged for slain journalists

THE MEDIA ethics body Philippine Press Council, consolidated all the murder of journalists and urged law-enforcers to punish the guilty.

Considering that [illegible] may have occurred in many remote reports, the council said in a statement that [illegible] with journalists could be settled civilly.

Those aggrieved may refer to the editors or elevate their complaints to the council itself.

"We offer the Press Council as an alternative to lawsuits ... But definitely nothing justifies killing journalists," it said.

"We exhort our colleagues in the news profession in contexts as to seek the truth, despite the risks and threats to their safety, observing the highest professional and ethical standards," it said.

But the assurance said that might no longer be necessary because the two had promised to appear this week.

Gonzales said the President had already warned many to him. Fr. pillars of the 95-million "freedom fund" he sent to the witness protection program, but he said he had doubted in case the money is to send people who give tips and withdraw in the killing of journalists.

Money for informers

"We are going to use the money to encourage whistle-blowers and witnesses to come out," he said.

Ms. Arroyo condemned the killing of journalists in this and Speaker Jose de Venecia founded the press freedom fund intended to speed up the solution of cases involving the murder of media people.

The fund will provide reward money for informants who could help crack the cases and provide financial assistance to the families of the victims.

Ms. Arroyo donated P1 million to the fund. De Venecia put up P1 million from his pork barrel funds and added another P300,000.

Killings must stop

Ms. Arroyo reminded that "the attacks against our journalists are frightening and must be stopped."

"The murders of journalists is but one sad chapter in the growing culture of violence that's sweeping into modern societies," she said.

She expressed the hope that "our culture of today is generating for us much evidence and hoping on [illegible] death inquiry on our growing culture of violence."

She added: "From acts of wanton violence against the news and writers who form the very foundation of other press and opportunity we unite all of society to be within the fold."

"We must not [illegible] proud as a nation 'if you let criminals cut down defenders of democracy,'" she said.

"We won't rest until the perpetrators of these violent crimes have been brought to justice and punished," the President said.

Whole justice system alerted

She said she had ordered the authorities "to leave no stone unturned in tracking down those called bloodied killers."

"The whole criminal justice system has been alerted and put in motion ... We must solve these crimes but we must also go beyond these crimes to turn the current violence around," she said.

She also ordered the organizers of the fund that the awards should embolden others to attack journalists found in Metro Manila.

"If they can get away with killing community journalists, they can shift ... [and] go after Metro Manila journalists," he said.

Fund replenished

Inday Espina-Varona, chair of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, said the media had won a "welcome development" and "an acknowledgement of the value that have the media profession in the country."

"The fund is a step forward on solving the country's grave problem crisis," Varona said. She added: "It is not the solution."

A slate of Espina, Varona Manolette, attended the media fund breathing in the Palace and thanked officials for their concern.

IBP board expels De Vera

By C.V. Bagayaua

THE SENATE elected president of the fast-growing line of the Philippines may not be assuming the IBP presidency after all.

Senator Ed De Vera, who is set to assume the IBP presidency on July 1, has been expelled as IBP-Senate member by the IBP's board of governors.

The vote was that IBP board voted 9-3 in favor of expelling De Vera as board member for allegedly calling fellow lawyers in opposing DE's position on a new law parking up voters' [illegible] law.

But De Vera protests and he would question the IBP resolution, stating him from the board before the Supreme Court. He said his expulsion was not "automatic" and would require the high court's approval.

"The truth of the matter is that I'm being harassed and pressured for taking a position opposed to the board's," he told the Inquirer.

De Vera has opposed IBP's decision to withdraw a petition questioning the constitutionality of the law increasing court fees. He said a number of IBP's chapters want the IBP to continue fighting in behalf of the public.

A certain Zoilo Antonio Velez, a lawyer, had earlier sought and gotten a temporary restraining order barring De Vera from sitting as IBP president, a position he's supposed to automatically assume being the board's executive vice president.

On Thursday, IBP governor Romulo Sierra filed a complaint with the IBP and sought De Vera's removal as member of its board of governors.

De Vera was accused of talking delegates in last month's plenary session it illegal to oppose the IBP resolution and [illegible] opposition to the court fee increase.

The following day De Vera and the IBP board stood to meet him and denied its motion to remove members.

Sierra allegedly [illegible] from the proceedings has later voted against the effect that the board decided, 9-3, to oust De Vera out. De Vera and a two-thirds vote of the nine-man board were needed to expel a member.

De Vera said Sierra got his wish when outgoing IBP president Jose Carlo "Boy-gaby" allowed another vote on the ruling.

"It was a dangerous result," De Vera alleged. "Sierra acted as accuser, prosecutor and judge. They think I'm a threat to them. Some people just feel personally insecure."

But De Vera found an ally in Jesus Quinaga of the IBP's Quezon province chapter who said the ouster was brought by the "tyranny of the majority."

"When the majority of the board voted against him, they didn't represent the interest and sentiments of the IBP members," Quinaga told the Inquirer.

Jamby, bishops act to block CA nod for Defensor

By Blanche S. Rivera

IT'S GOING to be tough sailing for Environment Secretary Michael Defensor in the Commission on Appointments today after 12 representatives of environmental and religious groups filed a formal opposition to his appointment.

Defensor's critics, led by Sen. Jamby Madrigal, said he should not be allowed to head the Department of Environment and Natural Resources because he was "primarily a businessman and exploiter, not an environmentalist."

"Pulilan lang, walang personalan. It's just a job, nothing personal," Sen. Jinggoy Estrada told reporters yesterday.

Estrada also opposed Defensor's confirmation are Catholic bishops Julio Labayen of Iligan, Quezon; Jose Manguiran of Dipolog City; Ramon Villena of Nueva Vizcaya and Deogracias Iñiguez of Cabanatuan City. Bishop Felito Kalaw of the United Methodist Church and Bishop Ephraim Fajutagana of the Iglesia Independiente, as well as Fr. Robert Reyes of Cambanna.

Madrigal said seven other bishops were set to join the loose coalition of Defensor critics, which calls itself Sa Ti M.I.S.E., short for Mining and Illegal Logging Kill the Environment.

Since his appointment, Mr. Defensor has openly advocated policies and programs which are adverse to environmental protection and conservation, "talungin sana ito ito ni

DEFENSOR MADRIGAL

Edsa.

The bishops cited the DENR's lifting of the moratorium on quarrying in Quezon, where hundreds were killed and thousands displaced after four successive typhoons hit the province late last year.

Mahlon Bonstrom, who lost 14 family members, including her two children, in the flash floods, said Defensor had promised that the logs that had come tumbling down the mountains would be used to rebuild their homes but these continued to be shipped out of the province.

"I suspect them, but I feel that there are unfair and unfounded accusations against my person and particularly my position as secretary of the DENR," Defensor said in a hastily called press conference rare hours after Madrigal's media briefing.

"It's unfair that I'm being accused as the personal marketing agent of the country on mining. It was Congress (that) approved it and the Supreme Court (that) upheld it. If they have anything against mining, they should bring it to the Supreme Court," he said.

Defensor said that since mining had been approved by Congress, he was working to make sure the government would implement responsible mining in the country.

He also explained that quarrying in Quezon was limited to the river beds and was directed because Quezon residents themselves wanted the infrastructure in the province completed.

The logs for housing, he said, were all accounted for and would be turned over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development for its joint project with Ceawad Bulungan.

CONGRATULATIONS to MR. ROY B. BATHAN

who passed the UNDERSTANDING exam last April 28, 2005 in Saipan. He is the son of the late Ricardo C. Bathan, Sr. & Amicia B. Bathan of Sta. Teresita, Batangas City.

Greetings from: Nathan a. Anna Fernando Amicia B. Bathan

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MESSAGE

The Philippines takes pride in hosting the 10th Annual Living Lakes Conference, and welcomes the 70 international participants from five continents.

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The Philippines joins the international community in taking bolder steps to realize our collective aspiration of a world made more livable because of our living lakes and healthful environment. May this five-day conference result in sustainable cooperation and bold action among all nations compromising our planet earth.

MABUHAY!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozon

US Senate links Russian officials to Iraq oil scam

By Evelyn Leopold

UNITED NATIONS—Saddam Hussein's government provided Kremlin officials with oil rights worth millions of dollars under the oil-for-food program in a quest to lift UN sanctions against Iraq, a US Senate panel report concluded on Monday.

The oil allocations were "compromises for support," former Vice President Yahe Yimi Hamadou was quoted in the report issued by the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

The report, based on interviews with Iraqi officials, including Tariq Aziz, the former deputy prime minister, follows a trail of money, leading to Alexander Yakovlev, the former chief of staff to Russian President Vladimir Putin and former President Boris Yeltsin.

Another major beneficiary was ultranationalist legislator Vladimir Zhirinovsky, a regular visitor to Iraq.

There is no evidence Putin knew of the payments, Senate investigators said.

Saddam's goal was the lifting of sanctions imposed after Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait in 1990. Under the oil-for-food program, which began in late 1996 and ended in 2003, Iraq was allowed to sell oil under supervision and buy goods to ease the impact of the embargo on ordinary people.

The Russian allocations had been disclosed in an October 22A report by Charles Duelfer, a former US and UN weapons inspector. But the Senate report contains more documents and details.

It names the transactions as the Russian President and Council that Saddam headed via shell companies, particularly Aviashelf Trading Ltd. in Cyprus, in Russian oil firms, such as Slavneft, and the Aviation-based Royal Inc., whose executives were endorsed by federal prosecutors last month.

But diplomats noted that Russia, then Iraq's closest ally on the UN Security Council, had major qualms about the sanctions since 1991, mainly because long-owed Moscow billions of dollars for past weaponry and other items.

Zhirinovsky and his Russian Liberal Democratic Party were awarded the rights to sell 71.6 million barrels of Iraqi crude oil from June 1997 to December 2002, the report said. These contracts probably netted $8.479 million for its profits, it added.

The panel estimated at least $1 billion was earned by the Russian President Council, either through briberies or his confidants. Sergei Ivanov. The names were also notated in $1.6 million in bribes or surcharges on oil.

Yakovlev and Zhirinovsky previously denied the allegations and the Russian officials had said they would wait for a definitive report from Paul Volcker, appointed by the United Nations to conduct a independent inquiry into the programs.

The Russian allegations are part of a broader investigation on Tuesday.

"The purpose of these hearings is to lay out in detail... the massive volume of allocations to Russian oil firms in an oil-exporting nation," said Sen. Norm Coleman, the Minnesota Republican chairman of the panel.

The $67 billion UN program began to be seriously abused in late 2000, when Iraq demanded "surcharges" on oil exports.

This changed in mid-2001 when Britain and the United States let UN oil prices approximately to a Security Council panel.

At the same time, the United States, Britain and France attempted to cut down the 105 list of 700 oil buyers, many of them shell companies. But Russia refused.

Iraq could not sell directly to American firms so a Russian firm bought the oil on paper while Royal arranged for the lifting. The United States, through Bayol and other oil companies, received two-thirds of Iraqi exports during the time the surcharge was being paid, industry sources said. Reuters

UNIVERSE AT HER FEET
Cynthia Olavarria, Miss Puerto Rico Universe 2005, poses in her BSC swimsuit during the taping of Miss Universe 2005 segment at the Siam Thani hotel in Bangkok...May 13. The 54th annual Miss Universe competition will take place in Bangkok on May 31. ...

Indonesia tests more pigs for bird flu virus

JAKARTA—Indonesia is testing pigs in several regions for bird flu after discovering the virus in nature on densely populated Java Island, an official said on Monday.

The finding last week heightened fears that the most lethal deadly virus could spread to humans in the world's fourth-most populous country and Southeast Asia's biggest economy.

Pigs can carry human flu viruses, which can recombine with the avian viruses, swap genes and create virulent new strains, health experts say.

They fear the virus could mutate into a form which can pass easily among humans and trigger a global pandemic that could kill millions.

Tests have been conducted in several places, including the resort island of Bali, but so far only one area in West Java has shown positive tests for avian influenza in pigs.

Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim country and pig farming is not widespread. Many regards pigs as unclean animals.

"It's being carried out, but until today the results of the (other) sites show negative," the director of animal health at the agriculture ministry, Tri Satya Putri Naipospos, said.

"The pigs are not showing signs of being unhealthy and thus we can't say they're infected. So far, three (pigs in West Java) are positive carrying the virus," he said.

He declined to give details of the location where the positive tests were made in statements on the kinds of measures the government was taking, saying the found public panic.

But she said authorities were taking necessary biosecurity and sanitation measures to keep the situation under control.

"Let the government work on this first," she said.

Naipospos said authorities had not decided whether to conduct a mass cull of pigs.

So far there have been no reports of people in Indonesia being infected by the bird flu virus. Since 2003, 36 Vietnamese, 12 Thais and four Cambodians have been killed by the H5N1 strain.

On Monday, health officials reported of Vietnam's first human case in a month—a 32-year-old Vietnamese man who are thought that had died of a disease.

Naipospos from Indonesian poultry workers have been sent for tests in Hong Kong as a precaution, officials said. Reuters

14 get to US inventors hall of fame

AKRON, Ohio—Electric guitar pioneer Les Paul was one of 14 people inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame this year.

Paul invented the solid-body electric guitar in 1946, and his Gibson/Guitar Corp. model is one of the best-selling instruments in the industry. The 89-year-old is widely renowned for his recording techniques.

Paul also has won five Grammy awards.

Other inventors inducted on Saturday included Dr. Eric Jeffreys, who invented genetic fingerprinting, and Robert Bradbeck, who has earned more than 150 patents and inventor of the modern photocopier.

The hall was founded in 1973 by the US Patent and Trademark Office and the National Council of Intellectual Property Law Associations.

To accept nominations on its Web site but inductees are selected by a committee including leaders in scientific and technical fields. There are 235 inductees in the hall of fame. AP

Just tell me why you did it, grieving father asks IRA bomber

By Paul Reynolds

IRVINGELLEN, Northern Ireland—After 25 years of grieving, John Maxwell Darcy wants to ask the IRA bomber who killed his teenage son a simple question: "Why did you do it?"

Only when he knows the answer can he bury the ghosts from one of the most notorious Irish Republican Army attacks in its 30-year fight to oust Britain from Northern Ireland.

Maxwell's 19-year-old son Paul was the front boy for Queens Electrics in County Down when a bomber on Bloody Friday accused that he was killed in 1979 when an IRA bomb exploded on board shortly after they set sail from the fishing village of Mullaghavoo in County Sligo, northwest Ireland.

Under the terms of the 1998 Good Friday accord that brought an uneasy peace in Northern Ireland, hundreds prisoners were released early from jail. Among them was Thomas McMahon, the bomber who killed Maxwell's son and three others.

"I would like to meet him. If there is any sign that we share a measure humanity, it would be worth it," the retired schoolteacher said in an interview about the time-bomb that scarred his life.

"If he could come halfway towards seeing my point of view, it would be worthwhile," Maxwell said of McMahon, who was released in 1998 and now lives across the border in the Irish Republic.

In the British province where more than 3,600 people were killed in three decades of sectarian violence between Protestants and Catholics, Maxwell brings disarming statistics apparently alive.

Now 68, white-haired and bearded, he admits it took him 18 years to pluck up the courage to see a psychotherapist and relive the nightmare days when his son ended up in the wrong place at the wrong time.

"It was not indeed humour. I was holding it all in. I cried for two hours. That was a big turning point for me," he said. AP

Russian tycoon found guilty of 4 charges

MOSCOW—A Moscow judge on Monday found former head of business oil major Yukos Mikhail Khodorkovsky guilty of four of the charges against him.

He was found guilty of theft with conspiracy, damage to property rights via fraud, malicious failure to obey a court order and personal tax evasion.

The judge was still reading the verdict on the third of seven charges against Khodorkovsky.

Khodorkovsky on trial for tax evasion and embezzlement, has gone from being the quintessential post-Soviet business baron to the nation's most famous prisoner.

Prisoners of the 41-year-old, who has been in jail since his arrest on Oct. 25, 2003, said private-media hearing began on Monday, used to show the hypocritical billionaire hobnobbing with the likes of Bill Gates at charity events.

Today, they show him wearing suit from behind bars of a metal cage—the traditional place for defendants in Russian courtrooms.

Prosecutors have requested a 10-year jail sentence for Khodorkovsky, and he hints the prospect of losing his personal fortune confiscated and the company he built broken apart.

How distant such a possibility seemed ahead of Khodorkovsky's arrest in late October 2003.

Prior to his arrest, Khodorkovsky was Russia's richest man, with a worth that forbes magazine estimated at $15 billion (13 billion euros)—one of Russia's most famous post-Soviet oligarchs.

The onetime member of the Communist-dominated youth movement, Khodorkovsky was among a handful of men who deftly adapted and took advantage of the chaos that accompanied the crumbling of the Soviet Union to emerge with incredible wealth.

He failed in his first entrepreneurial venture, a cafe, made money by importing computers and, at age 26, established Bank Menatep.

Menatep made shrewd loans to cash-strapped Soviet firms and used to barter transactions into hard currency and by 1995, Khodorkovsky was ready for his next step—getting a piece of the state's vast oil industry.

He gained control over Yukos through a shady privatization during which workers picked up Russia's shaky national treasures assets for bargain-basement prices at questionable auctions.

At the Menatep-organized auction, Khodorkovsky and his associates paid a reported $350 million for Yukos, which before his arrest had a market capitalization of more than $30 billion.

The self-spoken Khodorkovsky aggressively consolidated control over what eventually became Yukos, enacting a change-minority shareholders.

After the 1998 financial crisis, he invested massive amounts back into Yukos, which became the first Russian major to adopt international accounting standards and began to hire Western-trained managers.

Prior to his arrest, Yukos was considered Russia's most transparent and best-governed company, an investment darling that, in the words of one analyst was "the power-child of post-Soviet Russian lore."

He arranged a merger with a small oil Russian rival Sibneft, which created the world's fourth-largest oil and natural gas producer, and there was talk of a US major buying a stake in the new behemoth. Reuters, AFP

KHODORKOVSKY

38 bodies dumped in 3 Iraq sites

BAGHDAD—The bodies of 38 men were executionstyle were found dumped around an abandoned chicken farm, a trash-strewn lot and an inundated stretch of the provincial police said. The grisly finds were the latest in an endless stream of violence, much of it designed to destabilize Iraq's new government and hasten a US retreat.

More than 450 people have been killed in just over two weeks since Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari's Cabinet was announced. At least 10 more Iraqis were killed in a spree of bombings and shootings Tuesday.

On a lightning visit Sunday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged Iraqis to be patient, saying the insurgency can be beaten with the Jaafari's strong political alternative.

"The insurgency is very violent but you do find some pockets are just outlined by" Rice said after meeting with Jaafari and other officials in Baghdad and the northern Kurdish region. "The hope... are now going to have to intensify their efforts to demonstrate that in fact the political process is the answer for the Iraqi people."

A land mine bomb exploded early Monday targeting a passing Iraqi army convoy in Baghdad's southwestern Mansour district, but the blast missed two civilians and wounded four others, including two Iraqi soldiers, said police Lt. Ghassan Hassan.

On Sunday, police in Baghdad's Sadr City a Shiite dominated slum, found 18 slain men, many appearing to be in their 20s and three of them bounded, lying face down in a shallow grave in a lot Sunday. Residents told police a truck dumped the bodies there early Sunday and three people and three policemen in Gil Hadi Al-Obeidi.

An Associated Press photographer saw the bodies lying in the ground. Only hands and behind their backs, some blindfolded and at least three killed wounds in each of their heads. The men were wearing civilian clothes, and had no identifying documents. AP

Corporate employee Japan top taxpayer

TOKYO—A land manager headed the list of Japan's top individual taxpayers in 2004, becoming the first company employee to reach the top, the National Tax Agency said on Monday.

Tetsuro Kinshata, 46, paid 3.69 billion yen ($34.35 million) in income tax, mostly from commission earnings through his work at Tower Investment Management Co.

While Kinshata is estimated to have earned 1.9 billion yen last year by working for the firm, some 39 percent—the largest percentage of income in the top 100 was derived again due to gains from stock transactions, Kyodo news agency said.

Those who earned their income through salaries accounted for 20 percent and those through stock dividends to 16 percent, Kyodo said.

Kinshata is the first corporate employee to top the standings since the agency began disclosing them in 1988, breaking an absence of health food firms who have become regulars on the list recently.

Other firms, operator of a diet product sales network who topped the list in 2003 on the back of a health food boom among Japanese women, fell to fourth place. Reuters

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Newsweek says sorry for explosive Koran report

AN AFGHAN boy reads the Holy Koran at the Pashtun-e-Ziblal Mosque in Kabul, May 16. —AFP

WASHINGTON—Newsweek magazine said on Sunday it erred in a May 9 report that US interrogators desecrated the Koran at Guantanamo Bay and apologized to the victims of deadly Muslim protests sparked by the article.

Editor Mark Whitaker said the magazine immediately reported that US military investigators had confirmed that personnel at the detention facility in Cuba had flushed the Muslim holy book down the toilet.

The report sparked angry and violent protests across the Muslim world from Afghanistan, where 16 were killed and more than 100 injured, to Pakistan to Indonesia to Gaza. In the past week it was condemned in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Malaysia and by the Arab League.

On Sunday Afghan Muslim clerics denounced as evil lie a holy war against the United States.

"We regret that we got any part of our story wrong, and extend our sympathies to victims of the violence and to the US soldiers caught in its middle," Whitaker wrote in the magazine's latest issue, due to appear on US newsstands on Monday.

The weekly news magazine said in its May 21 edition that the information had come from a "knowledgeable government source" who told Newsweek that a military report on abuse at Guantanamo Bay said interrogators flushed at least one copy of the Koran down a toilet in a bid to make detainees talk.

But Newsweek said the source later told the magazine he could not be certain he had seen an account of the Koran incident in the military report and that it might have been in other investigative documents or drafts.

Whitaker said that Newsweek did not know if the reported toilet incident involving the Koran ever occurred. "As to whether anything like this happened, we just don't know," he said in an interview. "We're not saying it absolutely happened but we can't say that it absolutely didn't happen either."

The acknowledgement by the magazine came amid heightened scrutiny of the US media, which has seen a rash of news organizations, the reporters and editors that stories were fabricated or plagiarized.

The Pentagon said the magazine the report was wrong last Friday, saying it had investigated earlier allegations of Koran desecration from detainees and found them "not credible."

Newsweek reported that Pentagon spokesperson Lawrence Di Rita warned angrily when the magazine asked about the report's continued assertion that he had read about the Koran incident in an investigative report. "People are dead because of what this piece of trash said. How could he be credible now?" Di Rita told Newsweek.

The May 9 report, which appeared as a brief item by Michael Isikoff and John Barry in the magazine's "Periscope" section, had a huge international impact, sparking the protests from Muslims who consider the Koran the literal word of God and treat each book with huge reverence.

Desecration of the Koran is punishable by death in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Reuters

Tension on Uzbek border after deadly crackdown

ANDIJAN, Uzbekistan – Tension simmered on Uzbekistan's eastern border Monday days after a military crackdown in the nearby city of Andijan left dozens of people dead and sparked outrage by strong criticism of lockdown in the West.

Confusion was reported overnight in the Uzbek town of Kara-Suu that lies along the border with Kyrgyzstan, where government buildings had been set ablaze after the clashes in nearby Andijan.

"There are reports coming in our surrounding us vehicle there were gunshots in Kara-Suu during the night," a foreign diplomat said by phone. "The situation there is quite tense."

The situation in the town appeared calm Monday afternoon, but there were no signs of federal authorities on the streets, where a few dozen border troops residents set fire to market stores, but summer clothing and a customs office, according to an AFP correspondent on the scene.

After a military crackdown in the nearby Uzbek town of Andijan on Friday in which dozens and possibly hundreds of people were feared to have been killed, scores of Uzbeks have sought to cross into Kyrgyzstan across the canal to the refugee camp that Kyrgyz authorities had set up on the other side, which was reported to be holding some 900 people on Sunday.

Kyrgyz border authorities have increased patrols along the Uzbek border near Kara-Suu.

"With the aim of preventing destructive elements from entering the country, the chief of border guards...decided to set up temporary checkpoints on the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border in the region of Kara-Suu along the Shakh-Oblonot Canal," said Gulnara Bondupova, the spokeswoman for the border guards.

Kyrgyz border officials said Monday that up to 150 people had been detained overnight trying to cross the border.

The bloodshed in Andijan started early Friday when months-long demonstrations over the trial of 23 local businessmen boiled over. Protesters had accused the men of belonging to an outlawed Islamic group.

Armed leaders of the accused stormed a local prison to free them, along with some 2,000 other prisoners, and thousands of people then reportedly converged on Andijan's main square to what quickly turned into an antigovernment rally. AFP

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Inquiry: Malaysia police corrupt

KUALA LUMPUR – An official inquiry into Malaysia's police force has recommended sweeping reforms to eliminate corruption and human rights abuses, called for a non-commissioned law to be amended and created for greater public accountability.

The royal commission, 400 pages of report, made available to the public Monday, makes 125 recommendations for improvements to a police force viewed by many as tyrannical, riddled with graft and misused against political opponents of the government.

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi announced he would head a task force to review and implement the recommendations, which include a call for an independent police complaints and misconduct commission.

Parliamentary opposition leader Lim Kit Siang Monday hailed the commission as "the most significant reform measure" taken by Abdullah since he took over from former premier Mahathir Mohamad 18 months ago.

Headed by former chief justice Ibrahim Abdullah, the commission said the top three police officers be dismissed from their ranks, followed by the establishment of corruption and class courts and human rights abuses. AFP

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OPINION

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Substitution

EDITORIALS

SEN. Miriam Defensor-Santiago made a lot of sense when she urged representatives of the major political parties to announce their plans for reelection, but unfortunately, no one was listening. Of course were listening but were understandably not receptive to the idea.

Tapsty Rep. Allan Peter Cayetano said that if all the leaders took up Santiago's challenge, no one would be left to run the country except the elderly Sen. Edgardo Angara, chair of the Lakas-ng Tao delegation. Filipinos, called her proposal "an extreme suggestion." But as they say in Spanish, "Grandes males, grandes remedios (Serious problems, drastic remedies)."

Santiago's challenge may be "extreme," but we believe that what she wanted to say was that the government needed young blood and fresh faces with a new vision that would lift the nation from poverty, dishonesty and inertia.

The old politicians, and especially the traditional politicians, have tried everything, but it seems that their best is not enough. If the country has not actually retrogressed, it has been stuck in a social and economic rut for the past 50 years. In the 1950s and early 1960s the Philippines was second only to Japan in terms of economic development in Asia. It has since been overtaken by South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. Now, Vietnam, which, only recently recovered from a devastating war, threatens to overtake us.

The Philippines has the material and human resources needed for rapid economic and social development. The problem is the lack of enlightened, patriotic and forward-looking leadership. Most of our leaders have been motivated by self-interest and self-aggrandizement, and not by visions of making the country grow and improving the lot of the common man. There is something terribly wrong with our political system that perpetuates this state of affairs. At every election, what Santiago calls "mindless voters" elect the same type of officials after entertainment-oriented campaigns during which serious issues are hardly discussed.

The hold of the local dynasties and traditional politicians on the electoral system discourages idealistic young people who would like to serve their country from entering the political arena. Besides, politics is perceived as a dirty, corrupt system that co-opts young, idealistic people the moment they join government.

We endorse Santiago's idea that there should be a major change in our political leadership. But we will not go to the extreme and say everybody in the present crop of political leaders should not seek reelection. Surely there are those who have managed to retain their idealism and youthful vision in the midst of a corrupt and corrupting system. The nation could still use their talents.

Perhaps, as in basketball, we should call for a time out and for the substitution of most of the players on the court. There have been a lot of fumbles, fouls, miscues and missed opportunities in shooting for the goal. It's time for the old players to bow out gracefully and to bring new, fresh faces into the game.

Scientists in politics

IT IS encouraging to note that the country's scientists have decided to enter the complex world of politics, starting with a bid for seats in the House of Representatives.

A group of scientists headed by former Science Undersecretary Fherodsito Tesoro has organized a party-list group called Agham and will field candidates in the 2010 elections. These scientists deserve not only our encouragement but also our support.

Congress is dominated by lawyers, businessmen and other professionals but it has very few scientists. Scientists in Congress could draw up programs to help solve the nation's problems. It's time we thought of scientific and technological solutions to some problems such as the development of indigenous and non-traditional sources of energy, the mitigation of the effects of typhoons and the development of native materials to substitute for imported ones used in the manufacturing industry.

Scientists in Congress could also help campaign for a bigger budget for science and technology. The leading developed nations today, such as the United States, Germany and Japan, were able to achieve fast economic growth because of their use of science, technology and research. With some scientists in Congress, the Philippines in the near future could follow in the footsteps of these nations.

Canceled birthday parties

VIEWPOINT

Jaime L. Mercado

OFW-mom Imarose Guzman rights is when many neighboring countries take for granted, normally this right is celebrated each birthday.

In this "young republic," 35 out of every 1,000 kids never make it to their first birthday, by the Commission Report in studies Mortality in the Philippines 82.

This is an improvement over the 10-plus decades there decades back. But more could have seen their first birthdays if we all did better by them.

Look at next door Malaysia. Infant mortality rates there are down to 8. In Singapore, it is 2. The top asian nations underscore the fact that these are preventable deaths.

Herod's "Slaughter of the Innocents" is replayed here with each birth. One of every 100 don't come across the wedding day of Nobel Laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel in his prayer or the heartbreak death-song cries: "God of forgiveness, do not forgive the murderers of...children here!"

Many of infants today are buried "life's short stories." They're borne by ill-fed mothers in job-short families, live deficiency anemia, afflict 44 out of every 100 mothers, die not functional literate and barely found.

Among infants less than a year old, mornings are as 1998 levels. These residents perpetuate arrests—and infants in their wombs—vulnerable.

Both during pregnancy and delivery, thousands don't see their first days. Out of every 100 births here, 35 had skilled health personnel present. Sounds impressive—until you find that in Thailand, they are present in 98 out of every 100 births.

Far too much of our money is stripped. The Philippine Center for Investigative Journal, team Abigail Ghaya and Vernice Cruz report that $100-30 percent of funds for medicines in public clinics end up as kickbacks.

Thus, too many of the kids succumb. Their deaths are the real stories of graft. There's no money because their funerals are nearly as expensive as their births—and out of sight.

Like infants cut down by merciless sword, their deaths diminish us all. "If my son lives in Somali, sobbing and hard homelessness, Herbal bewailing her children, no comfort for her, for they are no more."

But there are positive initiatives stopping down the number of victims. Business firms and governments, for instance, have back the spread of infant deficiency.

"In the 1980s, nine out of every 10 women in the Mountain Province were circumcised with guise due to lack of iodine. And half the Cordillera were affected," I recalled in an earlier column. But government and the private sector conducted a campaign to implement the "Asin Law" (RA#8172) with salient rule.

It is now determined that the Philippines has solved these public health problems, although there's still room for improvement. The National Nutrition survey said: It's not possible to call how many thousands of school children were saved from stunting, and numerous as normal.

But "that is not the end," columnist Sam Winslow said, "but the beginning of the end." The victory "is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

There's more hard slogging ahead. The Food Nutrition Research Institute believes the number of underweight preschool children at 2.18 million, roughly equivalent to the population of the whole province of Cebu. Stunted or stunted children are estimated at 3.40 million.

Worldwide, food enrichment has proven to be the most effective way to drive down child mortality. Its cost: 25 centavos per child per day.

In Thailand, 80 percent of families are supplemented with Vitamin A, iodine and iron. China fortifies its soy sauce. And 1000 IAAO is fortified with Vitamin A, etc. The US used federal aids to the 1920s to cope with its problems of iodine deficiencies.

Only decade will distance these burial capsule for our infants. That calls for implementing the Food Fortification Act better. Here's the world I know.

Major millers now provide flour with Vitamin A, Fortified Silipula cooking oil is marketed nationwide. Some 30 cooking oil refineries are already boiling this line. Fine Sugar Corp., packages and sells Vitamin A-fortified sugar, costing no example for scientific general industry.

National Food Authority (NFA) has a fortified milk mix. Despite Speaker for the Visayas Rachel del Mar Arte, Vitamin A's 40 percent Dole has pork barrel for 38 public schools to provide fortified pan de sal for students.

But it's always at the local level that government action can be most effective. That, however, requires that those governing executive departments be found in Manifesto.

The city council of the national chief capital were into to local law beside Ordinance No. 140. Authored by Councilor Jaime Cadiz, a former Philippine Constabulary City Food Fortification Code near governor what goes in the city's food stores and markets.

And the kids are getting a break. Approved with the banning of staple wholesaler (as) regulated in the Metropolitan Public Markets. Its sole gross local needs to what the national law prescribes.

The Muslims initiative seems to be catching the attention of local symbolic equality concerned with the plight of their kids. Davao is leading the pack. Councilors in Carmona, Bacolod and Baguio in Davao del Sur have adopted up their versions to regain food fortification backwardness.

The Muslims are similar. "These are people of the broken plough who have the fate of hunger for whom it is almost no law," noted the late food and Agriculture Organization expert-representative, Chadwick Haas.

Sheriff of Nottingham

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

ACQUIRED Palestine has a point. The Commission is clear, he says. The President may have the authority to issue (or lessen) credit and remain duress, but the Presidents may not have the power to order (or lessen) same. That is one difference things. Raising (or lowering rates) is the sole province of the legislature, it may not be the province of the executive. The legislature may not pass on that power to the President.

Which was what Congress did when it gave GMA the power to raise the value added tax from 10 to 12 percent over under certain circumstances, namely, if the national government deficit exceeds 1.5 percent of GDP or if the VAT collection exceeds 2.6 percent of GDP. As everyone knows, Congress doesn't want to be associated with a move to raise the duties' lives more miserable, and would rather lay the blame squarely on GMA's doorstep, which is the reason why it did this. Well, the Constitution expressly forbids it.

But the central rationality of the current VAT bill may be the least of its worries. I myself am astounded that Malacañang should be so damnably reckless in raising taxes at this very moment. Indeed, I am astounded that the BIR should be so insensible in running after tax dollars at this very moment, though for reasons only its officers can explain, those tax checks seem to consist of words that rather than big commercials. The main task astounded by it is simply this: Interfere than this very moment is there a court exercise between the abolishment of bureaucratic offices as Bureaucrats or have so as couple up more taxes and the utter absence of any indication. Those taxes are nothing back to us in roads, bridges and power and water.

That is a point that needs to be stressed again and again. Government's right to collect taxes is not absolute, it is conditional. It is premised on the demonstrable use of those taxes to enrich the nation and not a few individuals. The American colonists who revolted against the British crown put it succinctly: No taxation without representation. You may not be taxed unless you get to say how those taxes are spent. Needless to say, you do not get to say how those taxes are spent whenever an entire right bodies pour upon.

A friend of mine sent me this list of items to show the extent to which the current government has failed to give us back our taxes. On the GMA, we have:

(1) Become the most dangerous place in the world for journalists, worse even than Iraq. (2) Become the second most corrupt country in the world, next to Iraq. (3) Attained one of the highest levels of public debt (P4.08 trillion) and the biggest amount of foreign borrowing (more than Corazon Aquino, Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada combined). (4) Become the new darling of multilateral lending agencies. (5) Achieved the highest unemployment and the highest underemployment rate, including the collapse of the garment industry. (6) Had the most expensive and fraudulent elections. (7) Had the biggest number of poor, from 32 percent under President Estrada to 47 percent under GMA. (8) Had the highest price of oil products—over P50 per liter. (9) Had the highest dollar peso exchange rate (56 to 1). (10) Had the biggest number of underworld gambling establishments.

I just took 10 out of a list of 25 items. Some of the statements here are controversial, others are so. The latter are those made by foreign groups which have no external agenda, or which are just being bribed to say things different. The Philippines should be worried by being become the most dangerous place for journalists was made by the Committee for the Protection of Journalists and Reporters Without Borders. Shortly after the two groups announced the fact, a couple more Filipino journalists were shot and killed.

So to the judgment about the extent of corruption in this country, that was made by the World Economic Forum and not by the Devil's spouse Bush. He urges that the Philippines is not the first or second most corrupt country in Asia and the world but only the third or fourth, that is still a monumental failure of governance. That is still a matter of incurred with our representatives. I'll never mind the lame excuse, that is still execution, no more and no less than the one the Sheriff of Nottingham practiced on not on merry old England.

Which brings us back to why Malacañang and the BIR should make it very loud and private push to make citizens pay through their teeth in taxes at this time. The real question is not whether it is constitutional or not for Congress to pass on the task of legislating taxes to the President, it is whether it is the best and moral for the President to such as shy without batting any need to use our hard-earned money to better our lives.

The answers and compromises into the point evidently. What other reasonable explanation is there for anybody in the Palace to be so tone deaf to the VAT as a means percentage. What they should be using their brains now—the one thing that surely got to be taxed in this country—are the specific conditions under which the taxpayer may pay only so much or not at all from his income. I will applaud Congress only when it comes up with a compromise bill that says the citizens may have the power to lower VAT from 10 percent to 5 percent or abrogate it completely until such time as government cuts the cumbersome of possibilities or stocks rampant pillage and improves its standing in the eyes of the world.

Otherwise, all this discussion about VAT is a joke and its supporters should be forced to swallow it. I was tempted to say in our own Sherwood Forest, but there's a risk in forest in many there would be any forest left in this country.

Pinoy fishermen rescued SA town

FOUR BAY, South Africa—In this coastal town on the Cape Peninsula on the western part of South Africa an entry a number of people with brown skin and family names that sound very Hispanic. Names like Perez, Flores, Ferreira, Hernandez, Alcantara, Quiroga, Abrigan, De la Cruz, Pegram, Madel, Bautista, Fernandez, Aguilar, Laguilles, Hernandez, Manuel, Pascual, Clemente, Buenaventura, Cua, Padua, Lagon and Gomez. These are the descendants of early Filipino seafarers who nearly 300 years ago and came to be known as "Manilas." Today many of these Filipino descendants want to be able to trace their roots to the Philippines and visit it, people want to the way the many family names, even to trace the origin to Portugal, Spain, and had a grand clan reunion there, for a look up genealogy. Jens presentation has not been easy for most of Cheryl here.

* * *

Many of these family names are traceable in certain provinces, such as the Quinapes of Aklan and the Almontasers of Pangasinan. I told the Pinoy descendants here that a businessman from the Philippines named Jose Almontaser, a prominent Moreno (retired brig. Gen. Jose Almontaser was once national security adviser to President Fidel V. Ramos and another Almontaser was Philippine Consul General to the JP-PHILIPPINES department of company. Perhaps it would be a project of Tourism Secretary Joe Durano and the Commission on Overseas Filipinos headed by Ramon Ang to help these Kaibigan Abroad families to walk Bay from Cape Town by an engineer and sailor on return to the ships anchored in nearby Simon's Bay en route to America or Europe from the East. After the British occupation of 1795, Kalk Bay fell,

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cantiveros

albeit temporarily, to decline, but the boom in the whaling industry in the early 1800s soon put it back on its feet. The whaling boom proved short-lived, but before the boom could decline into a bust another "stealing" came with the arrival of the 59 spice schooners. Together with the emancipated slaves from Sumatra and Java to what was to become Indonesia, they added the Filipino fisherman" to make it in establishing the fishing industry in Kalk Bay, where there was an abundance of fish. They were central to continued existence.

* * *

As related by Shallett, a popular dietary dessert from the Filipino fishermen reached Kalk Bay has it that a ship from the Philippines was wrecked near Cape Point circa 1860 and the crew rushed at Kalk Bay. They found it so attractive and the sea filled with fish that they decided to stay.

However, Shallett opines that most of the Filipinos were ship deserters as well as those who fled in the aftermath of the coups of nationalist revolutionary hero Andres Bonifacio in 1897 and Cape Town on August 1897). A number of Pinoys who was an Spanish and Filipino prisoners, Burgos and Antonio, home.

* * *

One of the earliest settlers who, by virtue of his strong personality and strong patriotism, became the Pinoy head family was Nida Flores, a descendant from a 19 South Continental ship which settled at Cape Town on August 1897). A native of Pinoy who was an Spanish and Filipino prisoners, Burgos and Antonio, have been determined to build up the Pinoy community. He got on a ship and applied for the U.S. prison where he had enjoyed to settle there with fishing gear and quarters. There was "greatly re-

Years of the rising sun were in Kalk Bay reached Manila and spurred an increase in the number of families seeking to flee the political turbulence in the easier land between 1874 and 1876. They were boosted by the arrival of many emancipated slaves from Indonesia who would finally settle there. Thus instead of declining, Kalk Bay grew.

Walker says the Filipinos who settled here were Catholics, in 1906 St George's was the gateway of the Cape colony, granted their own church. Another Filipino church was built in 1926 St. Anthony's which is held their church.

But the life of the Filipino fisherman and the generation that followed was not easy despite the abundance of fish. Their average life span was between 40 and 50 years, the Philippine Post. "It was a life where hard spoken, upstairs, heart and muscular ailments were commonplace. Hangover sometimes had great difficulty in raising crews when, after a few days of intense alcoholic, left days at sea but brought the sand fever in the next months." Despite their reputation for being "the finest rock fishermen in the Cape Colony," their wages were probably low and they had to endure their "whites" and "coloreds" in the bars on and beside and in the south harbour to breed the family income.

* * *

Good and bad habits were observed in the Filipinos of yore, which are reminiscent of those of present-day Pinoys. Walker noted that the dapper of the boat was regardless the person as the "master of all" and his word was law. Once ashore, there was no "master" and "servant" relationship. Their wages were probably low and they had to endure their "whites" and "coloreds" in the bars on and beside and in the south harbour to breed the family income.

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A name and an obligation

At Large

Rina Jimenez-David

(HOW much is one's name worth? For diplomat Wurlanges, former ambassador and patron, the name is worth a lot, so it's perhaps no surprise. It is the surname taken from what he says on his "personal" French that he turned over Friday to Pacific Plaza Inc., the troubled subsidiary that has been entangled in the Philippine Rural Bank case.

Wurlanges' French surname was withdrawn today at the Securities and Exchange Commission's decision taken after a lot of work to build, and as Pachauan said it, he had indeed realized very hard for his millions. "We can ask my neighbors. I work very hard. I walk even on Saturdays, and when I see younger, you should believe in the office even on Saturdays."

But, he emphasizes, much as he would raise the P222 million, and even if he claims no to have "any legal obligation" to infuse PFI's working capital deficiency, he has "moral obligation" to depositors like him and his family's reputation is even more important. Though he made the decision on his own, he feels that shareholder should be informed "agreed with it and support the motion."

Wurlanges' decision with normality has something to do with Pachauan's corporate records. Still recovering from a quadruple bout by-pass for hearts, Wurlanges jokes that "in the last 20 years, I've been undergoing surgery for hernia. I noticed if I could bring my money with me, and no, but I have received no money."

* * *

BUT if you ask the ordinary plan holders of PFI, especially the many salaried clients who have subscribed themselves into the Private Enabling Pension in plan on the outside on of Pacific Information Plans' Coalition, they know exactly whether Lee or whether Wurlanges or your name has nothing. In their view, even if the Wurlanges's name is one more similar number, it is still the

Advertisement

Quarter-life twilight

SOON I will be 30 years old. It's so soon I can feel it under my skin. We die happen soon. I have dreaded the thought, so based to acknowledge the creeping signs, and in my heart pretended that I am still, and always will be, 25.

Funny how I figured this as be my "ideal age"—with enough wisdom gained from the teenage years, some acquired "real world" experiences, a head by dose of angst, while intrigued, not overwhelmed, with all the possibilities life has to offer. But when I was 22 I was convinced that it was the "perfect age." I also said the same thing when I was a student 19 years old. Now I'm finding it hard to take the notion of an ideal age seriously. I'm no I approach personal zero (read: age 30), I know that it's as far off and ideal age as could be.

But, age is just a number and everybody grows old. But I really grow to ever think that I will no longer be demographically classified among the "twenty-something." I'm probably guilty of romanticizing it a bit, but having soared out of that bracket is something I am not fully prepared to accept.

First off, I am no longer not the same, inner turmoils I have unwisely employed to make sense of my life. No longer am I astonished my condition as symptoms of the so-called "quarter-life crisis" whenever I find myself asking who my life is not the way I envisioned it, why I'm not living a single-handed existence," why it hasn't materialized. Or why many of my dreams remain unfulfilled.

"Quarter-life crisis," of course, is the funny term made popular by Alexandra Robbins and Abby Wilner in their book of the same title. Basically the catchphrase refers to the collective (some say middle-class) angst, uncertainty and identity crisis of those in their 20s.

I never thought I'd say this now, but it does seem unseemly to use single words like "angst," "alienated" and "anomie" in the course of a conversation. Finding solace in the same old songs, movies or books that guided me through my younger days and defined my existence feels redundant at times.

Call me a sucker for sentimental nostalgia or even nostalgia, but turning 30 feels like the end of an era. I think it's more than the usual fear of growing old. It means crossing over to the final phase, reaching the point of no return. It's as if as a person or where you used to look back and reminisce when you're done and what your life has become. Well, I am starting to look back now, and I'm not happy to see what my life has become—or where it's headed for that matter.

On the brink of reaching 30, I find myself less mature than ever. A wannabe like a real adult, but that's the only thing even to describe my condition. I find myself so confused, I see more of, or think others have answered them for—the world. "You are only there I am not answering my own questions.

I'm in a job which no longer makes me laugh, yet I can't pay for practical considerations and some sensitive blunders. I have wanted to move out, but getting a worse deal is always a risk. On top of that, I'm not sure when I really want to do so responsibilities.

Many of my friends have settled down, while I still don't have a family to call my own. I am single again, after maintaining a "forgive" relationship which I worried into so almost on my loneliness, no, I don't think marriage is a solution, but it now would find anywhere on maiden and come across of discovery.

I don't have any savings or property to speak of. I haven't established the "right" networks to advance my career. I can't claim to having done something truly worthy for my society either. All these standards by which normal women judge success are not in my vocabulary. I never done so not. I don't think I look in myself as a failure, but as I look back, I know I could have done many things better or differently. Still, as they say hindsight is always 20/20.

The quarter-life supposedly happens between the time of we college and before our late 30s. Except by some miracle, here comes of both, my issues were suddenly disappear overnight. Well, it won't be today or tomorrow, but in the meantime, I can't start to having some something truly worthy for my anxiety either. All these standards by which normal women judge success are not in my vocabulary. I never done so not. I don't think I look in myself as a failure, but as I look back, I know I could have done many things better or differently. Still, as they say hindsight is always 20/20.

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Young Blood

Jolbert D.

I'm sure to Fame asked the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? He welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below.—ed.

I have continued to travel than hope from somewhere. Like someone who has been to Europe, which came to my life more than a year ago and has helped me smell the flowers again. I still love to write, to travel whenever I can, and I can still hang my head to good rock music. And as cheesy as it sounds, I haven't given up on finding the love.

Life is what normally happens while you wait for some day to arrive, so they say. I'm actually living that statement with a vengeance. My life is probably not much different from the lives of the vast majority of young citizens and women who live relatively quiet lives of confusion and desperation. Some classes as I'm still in college, and I'm still working part-time. I still have three years ahead. I'm not sure how that is my personal body guilt to do a MD.

Even as I write, I can't exactly figure out whether I am still, in fact, part of the "young blood" generation. I feel old. A friend once told me I have an "old soul" embedded that should. Right now I'm in that in-between limbo between the young blood and the high blood, wedged somewhere in between the two generation's collective hopes and fears. By being older old or "generation V" and is now really a big deal for me anymore. As I approach the twilight of my quarter life, I can only aspire for one thing: I don't want a perfect worthwhile. I haven't cast's later it. I'd much rather pursue an independent spirit, aspire which I've never to be taken in the face of adversity.

That may look like a goal that is not grounded in the real world, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

Jolbert B., 28, works for a non-government organization and is actively thinking his master's degree at the University of the Philippines.

The INQUIRER is a member of the
PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE
"The National Association of Philippine Newspapers"

Food as culture (2)

Sense and Sensibility

Ramón C. Bautista

THERE'S something wrong but don't ask me what it is because I can't put my finger on it, ice cream of "ube which is right enough to have used a Chris sudden or the hairdos. In Macau's export items are meats that we have nowhere else to find—but the majority of Filipinos are not interested. Most of us think that "ta delito ay tuky" Di Quiapo is as far as we've developed and it's a shame because there are designers on every evening fabulous creations that are not for the faint of heart—made up as Singkit or Kiti's and, to all intents and purposes, these could readily be from Asian accessories of Cebu.

What is why nostalgic Tinta's idea of celebrating Filipino culture through fashion must think of such a rapid idea. Another Monique, the time consumed Cinema, has her custom gowns (one) every of her room. Antipatico on display in the lobby of Cinema 1 of Ayala Center Cebu for Project Magazine and we really Wanow that Monique L. designed the wedding gowns of Britney Spears and Christine Sarangsarang Jaks. Arnie Custom to you. She's downtown as young Hollywoodish, but she designs and has her shop on second by Ayala Center Cebu. Judy Hamer, Sarah Jessica Parker, Demi Moming and Jennifer Connelly are to name-drop a few.

It's not that the Filipino can't, but he already has "artistic flourish. Glimpses whose multicolour name have been off Columbia? Ips like beauty and the pride in showing much information it visually tangible. He has received recognition from Japan and Europe and has been to Paris to showcase his Couture sills. He has appearances European television and international magazines, and several of his designs were selected for the international table top festivals. Think Foreigners of the rose world I don't have actually stopped and asked if the best or display is the lobby is for sale. What Lobbyists has done a designer local organic material with hand made production techniques.

It looks like if we were to compete globally, we

must begin about the cheap labor for because it isn't and go for the high-end products, the way Hermes, for instance.

You may also be curious enough to check out another Cebu product found in the top stores of Paris, which does Bob Mok. In particular the uniques of designing combining it with hand threads, hemplegal and tassel. The tradition appeared early in an old Asian one, having started in Japan in the 17th century where designers were used as armor and armed bits of the Samurai and made in Mexico, Singapore, and the silk weaving in Vietnam and Cambodia. In the 19th century it was introduced to Europe and took 20th Black Assistance and Napoleon III became one of their famous collectors.

Because of the expensive hand-looking such techniques employed, the manufacturing has now shifted to Asia, especially Cebu. There is a rush among his Dona find in the designs, simple and unadorned, an amalgam of the traditional and the unexpected.

Other highlights are elegant and dressy bags of Jeanne Lhuillier that are you back $800 and she does not offer ready-to-wear but it's decisive which are also exported abroad.

Back down to the food at the coffee shop that becomes an Eastern Cebu kitchen, including grilled lechon and the delicious Cebu lechon.

Today being Tuesday, the Food Land Corporation will open its Pinoy Pampanguenie in celebration of Heritage Month, with guests chefs from PKI Executive Chef Jessie Sincioco and Chef Jessie Sincioco, who will prepare authentic Kapampangan delicacies. Sincioco is also the author of the book "Kapampangan Cuisine."

* * *

Some of the visiting chefs in Kalk Bay reached Manila and spurred an increase in the number of families seeking to flee the political turbulence in the easier land between 1874 and 1876. They were boosted by the arrival of many emancipated slaves from Indonesia who would finally settle there. Thus instead of declining, Kalk Bay grew.

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Good and bad habits were observed in the Filipinos of yore, which are reminiscent of those of present-day Pinoys. Walker noted that the dapper of the boat was regardless the person as the "master of all" and his word was law. Once ashore, there was no "master" and "servant" relationship. Their wages were probably low and they had to endure their "whites" and "coloreds" in the bars on and beside and in the south harbour to breed the family income.

Full public accounting of coco funds

THE PRESIDENT of Bukanda Cedes from the Coconut Industry Investment Fund, after having opposed it for its anti-spending of coco levy funds, in an attempt to save face. The money the Cedes from coconut levy funds for the benefit of the United Coconut Planters Bank, who refused to be identified, applied them lack of dedication and a clear attempt to prominently clear Cedes of the accusation made by former PCGG (Presidential Commission on Good Government) Commissioner Haydee Yorac. Through his silence spokesperson in the PCIB board, indicted the attempts to clear his name and as a unofficial lamb for being on "top of the order of the special accounts on PCIB of property owned by Dueling Cronies." (PDI, 5/10/05)

One of the board members who refused to be named was quoted as saying that Cedes "was hoping to be cleared by the ICIC." Another said that Cedes "cared for programs favoring the small coconut farmer," while another credited him for conceptualizing the direct cash marketing program. Given these praises for Cedes, it is easy to deduce that the PCIB investigations would be in order to protect Cedes.

The claim of Cedes that he was made a unofficial lamb is pretentious and aims to divert the issue away from the fresh accounting and probe that he himself admitted to public. Is he insinuating that Yorac is being used by Cojuangco to get back at him?

On the other hand, the direct cash marketing project might have added a few centavos in the income of coconut farmers in certain areas where the project is said to be successful, but it will not free them from poverty. The fact is, there are areas, such as Bondoc Peninsula, where this program only strengthened further the feud of middlemen or cupra working to the detriment of small coco farmers. There are so many problems that the focus on tax aside from his contract, with coco fiber, pro-cartels and the like, but to be able to produce them, the farmers must "control," instead of sell, coconuts.

He is insincere in our opinion that the levy is not simply about funds spending to effects of CIIF and other coco levy-funded companies. It is about the need to make an accounting of the levy money and to get rid of and how the coconut farmers can become the coconut levy funds.

—MANUEL P. DELA PEÑA, president, Pastor Foundation Inc., Cubao, Quezon City

No reaction to Marcos' speech

I AM issuing this disclaimer so as not to incur a lawsuit that appeared in the Opinion Section of May 5 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, supposedly coming from me. I have not released or cleared the release for publication of any letter to anyone to reprint of Bong Bong Boy Imee Marcos regarding Mr. Stanley So. I did not feel obliged to or the "Informal Chinese-Filipino businessmen and former ambassador" mentioned by Inquirer columnist Max to what speech and now to send to me

I am passing these letters from me for some use in my other publications, to which I had also sent disclaimers. In addition to print of it a concerned effort by a person who has been threatened by my company for cause to discredit my name and my person.

—ALFONSO L. CARANCHO-CRUZ, 4-T Evangelista Bldg., 2119 Chino Roces Ave., cor Don Bosco St., Makati City

Illegitimate debts

ELISEO was the keynote for fostering on its front page 2005, 4: 21/05; the speech of Supreme Court Justice Associate Justice Reynato Puno, at the recent 2005 20th National Convention in Baguio City.

Justice Puno quotes an economics of the University of Cambridge: "There are debts which should be considered illegitimate and therefore should not be paid."

We have known all along that we have been paying tons of money for the multi-billion Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, the Marcos-era Philippine Airlines, the Westmont editorial (PDI, 4: 22/05) still in line thanks to former Pres. Cory using the specific amount of $270,000 or around P13.5 million a day or P5.4 billion a year that our government pays for this monument alone.

The amount, if used to construct low-cost houses, could be used to build 10 units per day, or almost 3,650 units per year. If used for the infrastructure of underserved schools/children (which our club does for 200 children in Tara Hills, Quezon City) every school day at a cost of P1,000 per child per year—since we feed them lunches daily so the children, the P5.4 billion a year could provide 5.4 million school-children with lunch (5 million still every school day for one year!

Let's just hope the lawmakers in high places in government will realize the wisdom of Justice Puno's legal opinion and do something than well-meaning officials poverty in our country, such as ordering to pay illegitimate debts like the BNPP loans.

Thank you, Justice Puno, and thank you, Inquirer!

—EUGENE B. TORRES, Senior Chief Fire Handle Law, Market! Pilot, 20 Mt. Sajara, Filinvest I, Quezon City

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Sipac and Maximo Hernes, City of Makati or send a fax to this: 897-4-702, 897-4-704, or e-mail readers@inquirer.com.ph. Inquirer.net, ph.

Readers' letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is provided.

Flawed rice policy and hunger

THE SOCIAL Weather Stations' March 2005 survey published in the Inquirer on April 11) showed that from 11.5 percent in December 2004, hunger rose to 13.9 percent in March 2005. The survey said 2.1 million families experienced hunger—that is, without having anything to eat at least once in the past three months—the highest ever hunger incidence in 20 years.

The Plan Pinoy and Arroyo Hotwash on R1, a coalition of non-government organizations associated with the rice sector, is alarmed over the rising hunger incidence in the rural areas, especially as they mostly affect the families of farmers. Based on the 1990 survey, hunger incidence is 14.3 percent in Mindanao, 13.7 percent in the Visayas, 11.5 percent in Luzon, and 7.7 percent in the National Capital Region.

The country could have avoided this worsening hunger if government seriously put in place and implemented a coherent rice self-sufficiency program upholding the economic well-being of farmers and using sustainable agriculture as a cornerstone. The country's rice made dependence on so much imports just aggravated the problem. I'm talking about the wrong policies in agriculture that are being implemented by the government.

The government should learn from a 1989 experience, when the country fell into a food crisis. Instead, the government proceeded to import a record high of 1.6 million metric tons of rice this year. Where will we get the dollars to finance this importation which in the past averaged a one-billion dollar-volume?

We lead the government's decision to maintain the quantitative restrictions on rice importation and to push the above concession for another seven years in the WTO negotiations. But the extension would prevent just a breathing space.

Here the government will implement its policies and put priority on improving the lot of farmers so that the breaking point will not be reached twenty years hence or worth repeating.

The government should not deprive farmers of access to seeds by extending chem, credit and crop insurance only when they use seeds of hybrid rice and high-yielding inbred varieties, but also when they use traditional or farmer-developed seeds.

The government, particularly the National Food Authority, should remain active in rice trade, particularly in the farm gate to influence palay prices.

—JESSICA ALTED CASTRO, R1 coordinator, c/o Action for Economic Reforms, Mariñosque Bureau, Interagency Center, Quezon City

GMA should lead by example

IN REFERENCE to the Inquirer editorial titled, "Politically challenged" (PDI, 5/16/05). I'm feeling mad over the deep-rooted insensitivity of many governments officials to the plight of ordinary Filipinos. The House of Reps can cut off the government Services Insurance System, Bangko Agrarian, who was chair of the Philippine National Oil Co., Rolando Gerilla of the Coconut Industry Investment Fund and top officials of the Social Security System are indeed a breed of Filipino managers who use all means to enjoy excessive liberties at the expense of impoverished Filipinos without remorse. These officials are implicated in government problems, they should enjoy all the same constitutional rights and privileges but they should be prosecuted to the end. Mrs. President, as head of the government, you are the moral and legal authority to get rid of these people out right, in the people will. Before with, the President should lead by example.

—GEORGE B. GARCIA, Jr., bonnaregard7@yahoo.com

Politics in the family

DIVERSITY of blood produces friends. Aquino's immediate response to the politics of life and death in the United States (PDI, 4/28/05) was the obvious optimism. Why are politicians involved in the Inquirer?

Politics is in the air. As examples, scan a family directory from the start. But "Santos" here and "Estrada" in America mean two different things entirely.

For example, Schwartz pursues unpaid (uncommon) debt but husband had no "rights" to female inheritor share daughters [illegible] or died.

After all, her husband was living with another woman, minutes to get on with a life that included, not least, regular sex with a functioning partner interest, in bed, in bathroom, in kitchen.

Schwartz's husband, on the other hand, argued (correctly) that it was his "right" alone to decide his entire line, based on a wish shared between those 15 years ago or that nobody would press, disprove or, above all, overrule. She wrote the petition, [illegible] and the Supreme Court of the United States.

In the United States, and for all practical (and here legal) purposes, "family" is divided at the door. A fact of life that never deserves parents on the outside looking in and, in many cases, one of the parents completely. A uniquely American way of looking at "family" that evolved more by default than design—going back to a time in US history when husbands and wives moved west for the millions, never to return to their roots back East.

In Filipinos, on the other hand, were some Filipino workers in particular, husband family are where the parents are, till death. A marriage ceremony here changes nothing, even as the United States it changes everything.

In the Philippines, the Terri Schiavo case would have ended much differently, even opinion.

She her husband, a simple constituent and then marriage to her other relatives. But Terri Schiavo's parents, their living, breathing daughter, has to know where she belongs.

In the United States, on the other hand, the ten relatives of Schiavo (who were never anybody's business but her husband's, I wonder what future their happy parents and parents as Professor Aquino's classes would have to say about that, from Australia and Philippines herself.

—ELIZABETH SEVERSON, 903 Ave 2776, Ortigas City 1550

Inq7.net

More than 90 journalists have been killed in the Philippines since 1986. The Committee to Protect Journalists has identified the Philippines as the "most murderous country for journalists," followed by Iraq, Colombia, Russia and Haiti. What should be done to stop the killings?

[illegible] are usually killed in order to [illegible] public service. They are the almost vital first means of public channels for their work.

—Ed Montemayor, gala bolton, 31, [illegible]

Kidnapped. By 90. Who KNOW who. Is any by illegal? Legal or by illegal killing by [illegible]. Nobody yet knew it. Legal or [illegible] stopping for request know my [illegible].

—LOUIE LACERDA, 32, Manila

press should be given access to the by the government. As in [illegible] [illegible].

—Jerry Ann DIMAHAR, 38, [illegible]

stop [illegible] stop stop [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Across the NATION

Boracay in critical condition —Durano

OVERCROWDED beach becomes a place for passage to other beaches in Boracay as tourists crowd a small beach and a tidal channel that warns, theoretical, however, has been driven recklessly, according to concerned Boracay residents and businessmen.

By Doris Z. Pasaibogan

BORACAY, the country's top tourist spot, is now in "critical" condition due to unchecked development that has been going on for years, according to Tourism Secretary Joseph Durano.

The island's famed crystal-clear waters and pristine white sand beaches are in danger of being lost unless problems on sewerage, garbage disposal and proper construction are addressed soon, said Durano.

"The problem of the island is overpopulation. The problem is unmanageable development," Durano said in an interview in Boracay last Saturday.

"It's in critical level," he added.

Boracay's beach front has been encroached with all sorts of commercial establishments, including hotels and cottages with manicured lawns(s) know that make them more cost like semi tourists.

Covered creek

A freshwater creek along the beach has been illegally covered and on it were built many establishments.

A number of establishments close to the beach do not have proper sewerage systems.

And Boracay's garbage are thrown into an open dump out of sight of the tourists.

"First thing is, it stops," Durano said.

Durano, who was in Boracay for an exercise of the municipal government's long-reserved for the first time the Boracay Eminent Person Group) but the President for last April 11.

The others in that meeting were big-wave owners Boga Jobet and Jean Bisaldo representing Sir Sallee Fred, and secretarial head Connie Padilla.

The other members, Sen. Richard Gordon and Orlando Sacay, external vice president of the Boracay Foundation Inc., a group of big resort owners, were not present.

Put on hold

Durano said there would be no further development in the island until they could put some order to things.

He did not say when the moratorium would start.

Ichel said the moratorium should be upon: 1) The other priorities, he said, should be to draw up a proper zoning plan and install properly a sewerage system and garbage disposal system.

"If they can't put up a proper sewerage system, they should not build," he said.

"The island's a ticking time bomb and as moratorium must be called," said resort owner Jeff Belmonte, who said he have that Boracay may go the way of other tourist spots that were lost to congestion and pollution.

"It's not correct development. We have to do something," he added.

Last year tourist arrivals reached 458,753, higher than the 339,434 recorded in 2003, according to the Department of Tourism.

The DENR has postponed to June the closure of establishments that were found to have no proper sewerage systems.

It said 169 out of the 500 establishments did not have proper facilities.

Group of 20 tagged behind illegal logging

KIANPINAS CITY—An organized group of 20 people, composed of local leaders and top environment officials, is behind illegal logging in the provinces of Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato, a ranking military official said.

Col. Arby Ishalbert, commander of the Army's 601th Infantry Brigade based in Tacurong City in Sultan Kudarat, came out with the allegation after Environment Secretary Michael Defensor ordered an investigation of reports of massive cutting of trees in the hinterlands of the two provinces.

The reports were prompted by the seizure last month of logs worth more than P1 million.

In Datu Saguin, Sultan Kudarat alone, the military confiscated 95,000 board feet of logs.

Ishalbert said in Barangay Sici to Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, they found 30,000 board feet of freshly cut trees.

He said "The commanders of the people behind the logging activities" in Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato have caused "serious damage to the ecosystem of the adjoining provinces."

Jeffrey M. Tupas, PIA Mindanao Bureau

Global Nature Fund

Conservation of Laguna de Bay's Environment and Resources

Living Lakes

10th Living Lakes Conference

Theme: Responsible Stewardship by Lake Communities

Programme of Events

17 May 2005, Tagaytay City

9.00 – 10.30: Opening of Conference

Welcome Remarks:
- **Ben S. Malayang III**, President, Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands, Philippines
- **Howard Bolton**, Chairman, Unilever Philippines
- **Edgardo C. Manda**, General Manager, Laguna Lake Development Authority
- **Abraham M. Tolentino**, Mayor of Tagaytay City, Philippines
- **Marion Hammerl-Resch**, President, Global Nature Fund, Germany

Keynote Speakers:
- **Prof. Dr. Manfred Niekisch**, Vice President, German League for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, Germany
- **Honorable Michael Defensor**, Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines

11.00 – 13.00: Session: Issues on Lake Stewardship: Legislation and Legal Framework for Managing Lake Communities

Briefing on the State of Laguna de Bay
- **Edgardo C. Manda**, General Manager, Laguna Lake Development Authority, Philippines

The Concept of Water Quality Management Areas
- **Dolora M. Hapanowicz**, Assistant General Manager, Laguna Lake Development Authority, Philippines

Constituency Building and Protected Areas Management Board – Taal Lake
- **Manie Par Lane**, PUSOD, Taal Lake, Philippines

13.00 – 14.30: Lunch and Poster Session

14.30 – 15.45: Session: Communities as Effective Lake Stewards

The Laguna de Bay Institutional Strengthening and Community Participation Project
- **Joey Carino**, Laguna Lake Development Authority, Philippines

Environmental Management for Local Communities: How can it work?
- **Marion Hammerl**, Lake Constance Foundation, Germany

Industry Led Efforts on River and Lake Rehabilitation: The "SACPRET" Experience
- **Tess Cayton**, San Cristobal River Enhancement Defenders (SACRED), Philippines

16.15 – 17.30: Session: Sustainable Development in Lake Communities

Water Governance: The ICLEI Water Campaign
- **Pam Gallarde-Opaua**, ICLEI, Philippines

Tourism Development and Environmental Land-Use Planning
The Mallorca Experience
- **Toni Font**, Balearic Group of Ornithology and Defense of Nature (GOB), Spain

Revitalizing People's Initiatives for Taal Lake Management
- **Ricky Rural**, PUSOD, Taal Lake, Philippines

16.45 – 19.00: Film: EU-LIFE Project "Living Lakes: Sustainable Management of Wetlands and Shallow Lakes"

19.00 – 21.00: Dinner and Cultural Event

Laguna de Bay

OFFICIAL MEMBER HOST

CLEAR is a tripartite partnership of: Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands (SCPW), and Unilever Philippines

Priest fears townsfolk turning to life of crime

GUIGBA CITY—The parish priest of Sisi, Quezon has expressed fears that if the government continues to deny the thousands of typhoon victims—turned-charcoal makers of their right to desist livelihood, most of them may end up as criminals just to survive.

Franklin Melido, parish priest of St. Raphael Church in Sisi, told the bayanes that in several villages where most residents solely depend on charcoal making for their livelihood, stealing cooked rice from their neighbors has become an ordinary incident.

The priest also reported that recently, passengers of a van were detained of their valuables by robbers.

"Hunger is now forcing some residents to steal their neighbors' pots of rice. They are getting desperate. I'm afraid they will resort to more criminal acts ...' Melido said in a mobile phone interview.

Jeffer T. Mueller Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Benguet execs slam pesticide ads

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—While giant billboards advertising stability products have dominated the skyline of Metro Manila, vegetable farms in this province have to contend with posters and smaller billboards of different brands of pesticides sprouting in plots, roadsides and walls of farmhouses.

Provincial officials are not happy.

"They said the ads were doing more harm than good to the local vegetable industry's image.

The indiscriminate posting of the billboards creates the wrong impression that pesticides are being applied excessively on locally produced vegetables, they said.

In a special session held here recently, the provincial board saw the need to pass an ordinance that would regulate the placing of billboards along the roads and in vegetable farms.

"These billboards reflect the intense competition among companies producing pesticides and other farm inputs," Vice Gov. Clarence Bondoc said.

The result is that the vegetable industry itself will become the victim of false advertising—that pesticides are being used heavily on vegetables and that the vegetables have become overly dependent on pesticides, Bondoc said.

Beatrix Anunapo, chief of the agribusiness bureau of the Department of Agriculture in the Cordillera, said any local legislative measure intended to address the issue on billboards must also require pesticide distributors to secure clearance from local governments before they are allowed to install billboards.

He said the clearance request should put local officials on guard as to the kind of posters or billboards to be placed in their areas.

"Take a trip along Halsema (highway) and you will see scores of these billboards plastered on trees, waiting sheds, electric posts, fences and even house walls," Anunapo said.

Definitely, an overflow of advertisements on fungicides, pesticides, insecticides and other farm inputs would plant toxic ingredients in a food bigbite, he said.

So far, only Atok town has passed an ordinance regulating the posting of pesticide and insecticide billboards.

Board Member Johnny Ify, who was mayor of Atok when the ordinance was passed, said the measure was meant to warn pesticide distributors not to make the town a "free-for-all-zone" for commercial billboards. *Delmar Carbis, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

The most interesting people and personalities leave their mark in the pages of the Sunday Inquirer Magazine

INQUIRER

HISTORY REMEMBERED
A Philippine Army soldier aims his rifle at a target while another lies on the ground at the Japanese Shrine on Bataan Peas in Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya during a reenactment of the Battle of the Bataan Pass during World War II.

Cops seize chemicals for shabu in Bulacan

SAN JOSE DEL MONTE CITY, Bulacan—Police recovered six steel drums and 24 sacks containing chemicals used in the manufacture of shabu from a convenience store in Barangay Paradise 3 here on Monday.

Senior Supt. Benedicto Michael Siduro, provincial police director, said residents of Sitio Eskaweni saw the chemicals being unloaded from an Isuzu elf truck at about 2 a.m. Saturday.

Police said the residents, believing that the materials were harsh ingredients, immediately reported all their findings to their village officials.

Members of the provincial police, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and the Philippine National Police's Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force (AIDSOTF) went to the area on Sunday to check on the chemical cargoes.

Tests on Monday confirmed that the chemicals were used in manufacturing shabu.

Police said the crates contained bottles of hydrochloric acid. Each crate has 12 bottles.

The chemical consists have yet to be ascertained.

Chief Supt. Ricardo de Leon, chief of the AIDSOTF, said their information showed that the chemicals were owned by one Johnson Chua.

De Leon said Chua maintained a shabu laboratory in Quezon City.

He said the chemicals were dumped and abandoned by Chua's men in the village following a series of raids conducted by police and PDEA personnel in Quezon City.

De Leon said 28 other crates of chemicals were found on Monday in Barangay Gaya-Gaya, about 25 km from the earlier 3.

He said they received reports that several crates of chemicals were dumped in two other cities in the city, but they have yet to locate them.

Police on Monday arrested the truck driver, Gilbert Marcelo, in the city.

Marcelo, however, said he was only ordered to dump the drums and crates here. He said he did not know their contents, Carmela Reyes, PIM Central Luzon Desk

Trader escapes from kidnappers in Batangas

By Markon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

GAMP VICENTE UM, Laguna—Members of the Batangas police rescued a Quezon City business woman a few hours after she fled from her abductors in a coastal village in formerly Batangas just before dusk on Sunday, police said yesterday.

Chief Supt. Jesus Versoza, Calabarzon police director, identified the victim as Gloria Ting, 36, owner of a store supplying dental equipment and resident of 33-E Bella Juana Avenue, New Manila, Quezon City.

Versoza said members of the tourism police received a telephone call last Sunday afternoon from a certain Lorie Rayudo, a resident of Barangay Sunang Cuesta, informing them that a victim of kidnapping had sought police help.

He said a police unit immediately proceeded to the area to verify the report.

Refuge

Upon reaching the place, police said barangay officials presented to them Ting, who had earlier sought refuge in the house of one Elmer Cortillas.

Versoza said Ting narrated how six unidentified armed men asked for from her Alpha Dent office on Roosevelt Avenue in Quezon City at around 12 p.m. on Saturday.

"The victim said she was blindfolded, her hands were bagged (before they brought her) into an old model sedan," he said.

Versoza said the victim didn't know that she had already been brought to a coastal village in Lemery until the kidnappers removed her blindfold.

Just like in movies

Based on Ting's recollection of the events, what transpired was just like a scene from an old Dagang movie.

At around 5 p.m. on Sunday, Versoza said Ting noticed that one of the suspects assigned to guard her had fallen asleep.

Versoza said that when the victim found a chance to get out of the beach house where she abductors took her, she ran for safety until she was able to ask for help from Cortillas, who then brought her to the barangay officials.

He said the policemen proceeded to the beach house where the victim was allegedly held by her captors.

But the raiding team failed to find the kidnappers in the thicket, he said.

Versoza said police had already assigned police security for Ting while they were still investigating the abduction.

The government has launched a crackdown on kidnapping syndicates, claiming to have busted some of the biggest gangs.

Drought prompts gov to seek state of calamity

By Dionnes Magallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Relief operations in Antique municipalities hit by the El Niño phenomenon may soon be declared in a state of calamity to help the farmers hurt by the ongoing drought, which is drying up the dams and has reduced water in their irrigation systems.

Antique governor Exequiel Javier said a meeting with the mayors of the affected towns on May 10 to discuss the passage of separate resolutions, declaring their respective towns in a state of calamity.

After these resolutions were passed, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan would also pass a similar resolution so that the provincial government could use its calamity fund to help these towns.

The 16 towns hit within the two watershed areas in Antique province are Hamtic, Tibiao, Culasi, Barbaza, Tobias Fornier, Anini-y, Patnongon, Sebaste, Sibalom, San Remigio, Valderrama, Bugasong, Pandan, Libertad, Caluya and San Jose de Buenavista.

Javier said Tang assured him of immediate action on the matter.

Javier said he was pleased to call

Bomb sent to radioman kills boy

From page A1

who is the chair of the Alliance of Anti-Drugs Advocates in the community.

Reports said an unidentified woman asked a tricycle driver to deliver the package containing the bomb to Gerardo's radio station on Pelaez but the broadcaster was in Cagayan de Oro City at the time. For still unknown reasons, the box was brought instead to the barangay office.

When he was informed by the barangay tanod (village guards) about the package, Gerico immediately suspected that it was a bomb. He said he had been receiving text messages warning him of harm if he continued to talk against drug pushing in his radio program.

He advised the tanod to bring the package to the headquarters of the Army's 28th Infantry Battalion, but one of them got curious and opened it.

The bomb exploded, killing Rhalon James, 11, who was about a meter away. Wounded were tanod Ruben Libargas, Hamel Perez, 34, and Hamel's cousin Reno, 22.

Other threats

In Mabalacat City, another broadcaster said the threats against him had not stopped.

On Tuesday last week, police found a bullet in a .357-cal. revolver on the doorstep of Arthur "Sun" Sapangbuhat's house in Dau, suggesting in Kapampangan.

Sapangbuhat, a correspondent of dxOR Radio Sinalikha of the Catholic Media Network, said the threats would not deter him from performing his job. But he said he had already moved his family elsewhere to spare them from harm.

"I don't feel good about this anymore and I hope the police can provide me security," Sapangbuhat said.

In Bay Bahay, station manager of dxOR, said the threats could have stemmed from Sapangbuhat's coverage of a financial mess allegedly involving government officials in Dau.

IN THE KNOW

What is a letter-bomb?

IT IS an explosive device delivered via the postal service. Also called a mail bomb, it is designed to explode when opened. Opening the letter severs an the trigger, just like how a musical greeting card device cuts a song when opened.

The extent of damage depends on the amount of explosive put inside the letter and on whether the sender intends to kill or just injure the recipient.

Bombs delivered by mail can often be recognized because they arrive in suspicious packages or unusual looking letters. Sometimes, the threatened recipient does not expect a letter from anyone.

Other telltale signs:

- Excessive postage since a sender does not want to mail a parcel over the counter.
- The name or address of the recipient is misspelled and use handwritten to send a mail.
- It does not bear a return address.
- It is somewhat thick or has bulges.
- It feels rigid or appears uneven.

There are rumours that one can feel the odor. It is also oily considering that the bomb contents used to usher bombs is Oil.

Anyone who suspects a mail bomb is advised not to open the letter. If there is a pestending acting a rain, do not pull it out. Leave it as it is and call the police for assistance.

Do not also operate a mobile phone, as it may be one of the triggering devices of the explosive.

In the United States, anthrax can also be put in envelopes. But Philippine police officials gave assurance that nothing of that type had yet reached the country. The fatalities explosive here is 0.6. Michael R. Costa, *INQ Research*

Source: *Rhonda Baker Zhurko Explosives Ordnance Division*

Unpegan and other areas.

"Buddhist nun is covering the southern portion of Buddhism where lots of controversial issues abound. We have always reminded him to be careful," he said.

Survivor

Padam disclosed that Sapangbuhat was offered P50,000 to stop airing a report involving controversial barangay treasurer.

In October last year, the radio commentator received an anonymous call from two motorcycle-riding armed men.

Fr Shelly Cendaña, one of the two suspects in the attempted murder of broadcaster Alberto Mendoza of Bulacan town surrendered, provincial police director Miguel de Mayo Lacsi said.

Lacsi said the suspect, Army Cpl. Alberto Obrigon of the 75th Infantry Battalion based in Angeles, pleaded to his superiors.

Mendoza, a commentator of MBC's Radyo Natin in Bulacan, was on his way home at around 7:30 p.m. on April 18 when he was ambushed by two armed men. He suffered two bullet wounds and is still recuperating at a hospital.

Mendoza is known for his hard-hitting commentaries on illegal gambling and drugs.

The gunmen have been so far been killed this year and 13 media killings were reported last year. The figure prompted the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists to describe the Philippines as the world's most murderous place for journalists.

An investigation by the Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists in January blamed a "widespread culture of violence that is tolerated and even condoned by the government and officials" for last year's deaths.

The government has denied there is any sign that journalists are being systematically targeted.

Inquirer C. Alfaro, Grace C. Alcaraz and Ker Ma Rio A. Lucero, *PIO Bindoon Bureau and AFP*

CICHNA Cabrera, Miss Philippines Universe 2005, poses in a swimsuit while taking a break from taping a segment for the Miss Universe 2005 competition at the Dusit Thani hotel in Bangkok. The pageant will be held on May 31 .

PINOY VERSION NG HAWAII, SCOTLAND, AT NEW ZEALAND

Ang aming huling hirit summer special!

at

Sa Inquirable Pinoys! PAMBANSANG TAGAHANAP, PAMBANSANG ZUZENA

Making great things possible Globe

The InqTV News Video SHOOTOUT

Report the news that you know best, and earn the chance to win

Towing Huwebes, pagkatapos ng American Idol! Dito lang sa ABC

HOPE Globe

Question of the Week

The high prices of fuel, food, electricity, tuition, transportation and consumer goods make me feel _____.

Senders of e-text (E-box) as published in Tuesday's InqBox *will each receive an "Inquirer Mug"!*

Text your answers to 2327 (Globe) or 333 (Smart).
(Maximum of 160 characters)

Inquirer boxnamen/age/city/message.

Inquirer boxnamen/age/city/meaning address to 2327 or 333 or their prices will be evaded to them.

METRO
Edited by Emer C. Dizon-Gil

EZ2 22 8 SUERTRES 1 6 5 FOUR DIGIT 6 9 9 5 (tie-breaker number)
Text us your feedback
MEGALOTTO 6/45 3 8 10 19 29 43 P28,674,580.20
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Landfill reopening stirs up fears

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SAN MATEO, Rizal, officials are now ready with a proposal to reopen its landfill for Metro Manila's garbage that it ordered closed in 1999.

But this early, officials from neighboring towns said they would join the plan. Mayor Pedro Cariaga in Rodriguez (formerly Montalban) town and mayoralty candidate Casimiro Cardenas in Tanay said they would be "too costly and highly unpractical." The Montalban Solid Waste Disposal Facility in Rodriguez was on the decision list for the 1,900 tons of daily garbage from at least nine cities and towns in Metro Manila. And because this load is still way below its actual capacity, one of the facility's two sections is fully utilized, Cariaga added.

A source said he and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) was also looking at the possibility of reopening the landfill, which closed down in 2001. Recently, the San Mateo municipal government sent the MMDA a letter informing the agency about its proposal to reopen part of the landfill.

The plan quickly banned suggestions that the local government was setting its eyes on increasing daily trash from the metropolitan agencies, providing an alternative to the existing Montalban facility.

But San Mateo municipal secretary Ben Hur Escalante said the mayor's proposal was to accommodate only locally generated garbage. He explained that the proposal to reopen the landfill was San Mateo's way of complying with Republic Act No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act which provides that each local government unit should have its own landfill by next year.

Cariaga, however, said that upon of reopening the landfill, San Mateo could get dump to garbage in the 14 hectare Montalban facility.

The mayor also research but reopening the landfill and eventually making it a destination for the wastes of the municipalities could end up with the closure of the Montalban facility.

"It's the San Mateo landfill is reopened to cities and towns in Metro Manila, our facility will be receiving less garbage. Too little garbage would make operating the facility less viable and could end up in the closure of the dump," Cariaga said. The problem is that the San Mateo landfill could accommodate only a much garbage solids for Montalban facility could still be used for seven more years, he added.

When a garbage crisis hit Metro Manila in mid-1999, one of the cities ordered to close San Mateo landfill and the Pasig-to dump it quickly, only Rodriguez volunteered to accept the garbage of its municipalities, the mayor said. His decision to offer his town as the main landfill of the metropolis lured 407 opposition from protesters in Rodriguez.

But Cariaga said yesterday the town had found gold to garbage that was used to fund local projects.

Prices stable for school supplies

By Reuard N. Dominguez

PRICES of school supplies would remain stable when schools open next month.

Trade Secretary Juan B. Santos gave this assurance after meeting with representatives of the Philippine School Packs and Notebooks Manufacturers Association, Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Philippine Bookstore Association and National Bookstore.

Santos said National Bookstore, which produces some school supplies under its own brand, also agreed to maintain current prices, according to Santos.

The trade secretary said, despite going on how much they were willing to pay, buyers could choose from ordinary and special types of notebooks and papers.

Santos said the Department of Trade and Industry would meet with suppliers of raw materials used in the production of school supplies—cotton paper and fabrics—if it would affect unnecessary price increases.

HELPING HANDS
Parents, teachers, students and volunteers join hands in cleaning restrooms and classrooms at the Tandang Sora Elementary School in Quezon City. The nationwide cleanliness campaign was launched by the Department of Education in preparation for the opening of classes in June.

Fires hit supermart, Pasay homes

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Fran Kinglake

MORE than P30 million worth of property and grocery products were up in smoke when a huge fire hit a supermarket in Mandaluyong City early yesterday morning.

Firefighters had a difficult time putting inside the building because of its tightly locked steel doors.

PO2 Victorio Tolibas said arson, city police Bureau of Investigation chief, is the probable cause of the fire.

Investigators have not yet determined the cause of the fire.

In Pasay City yesterday afternoon, fire razed about 20 houses in a residential compound dose to elite stores.

The fire began at about 1:40 p.m. in the home of Irma Aquino and spread rapidly to houses in Barangays 37 and 134 along Dela Rosa Street.

Investigators said Aquino had a hand-time parking the fire can because she always leaves the fire burning whenever there was no electricity. Police is also bringing in three hours and five trucks.

Nobody was reported hurt in the fire. Rhelt Dalisay G. Mallo, trainee

MRT postpones 'inevitable' fare hike

By Luige A. del Puerto

PHALCO2000 has temporarily shelved a plan to increase the fare for the Metro Rail Transit 3, but DOTC general manager Roberto Sarmiento said the fare hike was inevitable. Fare had to increase sooner or later, so the issue would stop running.

"It is inevitable," Lim Investment during Monday's flag-raising ceremony inside the national police headquarters in Camp Crame.

"If we cannot increase our fare and government cannot subsidize it because we have to pay the operator, the system would stop... we may have (an arrest) (pass pass)," he said.

But for now, the fare would be unchanged, he said.

"The President (Arroyo) is still very sensitive to the plight of our people. She still have problems with our economy so she does not want us to implement it (fare hike)," Lumiqued said.

He also hoped that the government subsidized MRT commuters by around P80 million a month.

The rail system's current obligations total about P218 million a month. If rates could not be increased, the government would have to shell out P138 million a month.

Lumiqued said the government could not pay with the closure of the Philippine National Railways.

"We pay P80 million from other funding to carry out obligations. If we don't pay, the maintenance provider won't have money to fund crew. The train cannot run(?) Its maintenance(?)" Lumiqued said.

He said the government could delay the increase as long as it could subsidize the costs. But he strongly hinted that the subsidy could not go on indefinitely.

"We cannot (subsidize) for other (unintelligible) to pay our obligations. If we don't pay, the maintenance provider won't have money to fund crew. The train cannot run(?) Its maintenance(?)" Lumiqued said.

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Strict curfew hours for Manila's minors

By Tina G. Santos

ALARMED over the spate of gang-style slayings in some parts of the city, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza restricted by ordered barangays to impose a curfew on minors. The curfew shall be effective from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. the next day.

Atienza ordered barangay leaders to issue a memorandum to all local leaders, reminding them of City Ordinance No. 8040, which adopts a curfew hours from barangay on the city streets beyond 10 p.m.

The mayor took note of several reports that fights between rival youth gangs had been taking place in some parts of the city, especially in Sampaloc and Ermita.

He directed barangay chiefs to coordinate close with incumbent of the police in their areas.

The curfew would take effect

SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Molavidora

Heat still on Fil-foreign cagers

By Jann Mercurio

NOT so fast.

After completing the documentary requirements, the foreign-bred players cleared by the Philippine Basketball Association are not off the hook for good.

Last for PBA Board of Governors yesterday gave the go-signal for teams to further scrutinize the citizenship papers submitted by the 20 foreign-born players within a 90-day grace period.

"If they (teams) have an issue against any of the players, they have to raise it to the PBO (Deputy Board of Justice)," said PBA commissioner Rolli Eala after the lengthy board meeting attended by all team representatives except Coca-Cola.

Eala added that any decision by the justice department with respect to the authenticity of the supplementary documents turned in by the players automatically becomes the purview of the pro league.

Ellis

"Teams have 90 days to question the veracity of the documents. Otherwise, the players will be cleared by the PBA without courting any doubt on their citizenship for the rest of their careers," said Eala.

At least 14 of the 20 foreign-born players have been allowed to remain their mother ballclubs after serving a suspension for failing to submit the documentary requirements on time.

Barangay Ginebra's Eric Menk, Andy Seigle and James Wallenz; Jimmy Mapay of Talk N Text; Shell's Chris Jackson and Rafi Reavis of Coca-Cola remained suspended pending the completion of the documents being asked by the league.

Among the players already cleared were Gin Miguel's Sunny Seigle and Dorian Pena; Coca-Cola's William Antonio and Manny Ramos; Roy Castillo of Purefoods; Alaska's Jeffrey Cariaso, Jimmy Thaw, Dax Allado, Mike Cortez, Eugene Tejada and Bob Arboleda and Shell's Xialani Poblete and Tony Dela Cruz.

Eala said the 90-day period of scrutiny will begin when teams receive the complete set of documents submitted by the players.

"We still (have) copies of these documents in all the teams. If there's no objection to a particular player within that period, then they will be declared as legal Filbornjun players in the league," explained Eala.

Peping defers BAP decision for today

By Marang B. Castillo

COJUANGCO

THE PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee is not rushing a decision on its row with the Philippine Basketball Association of the Philippines over the formation of the national quintet for the Southeast Asian Basketball Association tournament in Singapore next month.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco postponed for today his decision on the SBP's "usurping" of the country's top players.

A previous announcement on the SEABA line-up to meet with several heads of the national sports associations at his home last night.

Jerry Bantigue, spokesperson for the former Tarlac congressman, confirmed that Cojuangco did have a meeting scheduled with POC chair Robert Aseniero "and two other persons in Intramuros."

Aseniero added that Aseniero had assured him that a decision will be handed down today.

Cojuangco had threatened to withdraw POC recognition of the BAP unless the sage body decided to field its own team for the Manila SEABA Open in June or reach several days after top BAP officials had supported a decision by the basketball committee to oversee the formation of a new team to Chot Reyes from among the country's top players.

The BAP was asked by Cojuangco to explain its sudden turnaround even as he was given by the POC executive board full authority to decide on the issue.

An official, however, said only the POC general assembly can sanction an NBA following the approval of at least two-thirds of the 39 voting members.

Volleyball stays in Bacolod

BACOLOD and beach volleyball stays in Bacolod City for the November Southeast Asian Games.

This was assured yesterday by volleyball association president Noga Hamada, who nevertheless confirmed the chance to hold the event in Cebu City.

"It's final. It's way too late to transfer venues according to the Philsea (Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee)," Hamada told the Inquirer.

He added that the Asian Volleyball Association is set to conduct a final ocular inspection of the West Negros College in Bacolod, including the lighting requirement for indoor volleyball.

"They want it (volleyball) to be held in Cebu City because of the unsuitable staging of the Asian qualifying there last March," said Hamada. "But the decision was all up to the Philsea."

Aside from beach and indoor volleyball, Bacolod will also stage crowd-drawing events like boxing, men's football and weightlifting.

Cebu will host taekwondo, judo, karatedo, pencak silat, sepak takraw, decathlon and cycling while Iloilo will host triathlon and sailing.

Marc Anthony Reyes

SSC spikers prevail anew

SAN SEBASTIAN survived a third set ousting lapse and regrouped in the end to topple the Navarra University 30-28, 25-15, 20-25, 25-18, 15-10 yesterday and seize the solo lead with two straight victories in the 2005 Shakey's V League first conference at the Ipomoea Gym.

Playing with as much confidence following their victories of a century over inaugural champion and last conference's runner-up University of Santo Tomas in Saturday's opener at the Araneta gym, the SSC spikers overpowered their rivals behind Cherry Jean Wacasungco, who opened fire again with 27 points.

The bulk of the output came from attacks as the Lady Stags found themselves the hottest in the outspun six-team field featuring the country's top collegiate women's volleyball squads including the hostess of the national pool.

Getting the right people in back-up a youth laden but talented crew, San Sebastian now seems to be a certified contender after failing to land a spot in the Magic Four in the last conference of this tournament sponsored by Shakey's Pizza and organized by Sports Vision Management Group Inc.

San Sebastian took the first two sets in convincing fashion with Wacasungco, acquired from Letran after the Manila-based team opted not to participate, teaming up with the solid hitting duo of Jennifer Bokanen and Laarmeer Ann Langay.

But the Lady Stags seemed to have relaxed too much, enabling the Lady Tamaraws to unload one solid defensive game to steal the third set.

Aimee Setting Bulay May shorts led NU with 24 points, 19 of them on kills.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
B1
BUSINESS

John Paul O. Mercado
Assistant Editor Doris G. Nakpil

4-month BOP surplus rises by 165% to $887M

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY posted a balance of payment surplus of $887 million in the first four months of the year, about 165 percent more than the $335 million in surplus in the same period last year.

The four-month BOP surplus also exceeded the target of $562 million for the whole year, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

BSP Officer in Charge Armando Ibarlos Jr. said: "The record-high BOP surplus was achieved in the light of a double-digit growth in OFW (Overseas Filipino Worker) remittances, strong portfolio inflows and lower foreign borrowings."

But even if the full-year surplus target had been met this early in the year, Ibarlos said the BSP was not in a rush to again revise its BOP target for 2005.

He said the BSP would review the targets later this year in order to reflect possible developments.

For the month of April alone, the surplus stood at $164 million, narrowing the windfall of $68 million in March although it was much lower than the $703 million surplus posted in the same month last year.

BSP Assistant Governor Rene Gumpal said the strong foreign exchange inflows allowed the BSP to purchase more dollars and beef up the Gross International Reserves.

The country's GIR hit an 11-month high of $16.499 billion as of mid-April, from $16.03 billion at end-March.

The BOP assesses the foreign exchange transactions between the economy and the rest of the world. Its major components are the current account and the capital and financial account.

Current account records international transactions in goods, services and income. Capital and financial account records transactions that involve financial assets and liabilities between residents and nonresidents.

LIGHT AT LAST
Barangay residents are lucky there are the installation of a solar home system on Brgy. Umusbungan, Pagbilao province. Typhoon-ratio solar households in the barangay will receive the same renewable energy system from the United States Agency for International Development (Usaid)-funded and Manila Philippines-supported Alliance for Rural Electrification Renewable Energy (Aare) Program. Members of the Barangay Renewable Energy and Community Development Association, also being trained by Aare, help install the 40 systems.

Treasury bill rates drop across the board

By Michelle V. Remo

TREASURY bill rates dropped across the board for the fourth consecutive session yesterday as banks continued seeking cash and have turned bullish after the passage of the value-added tax bill.

"Liquidity is at its all-time high. Also, investors maybe decided that rates continues to be positive," National Treasury Group Corp. said in a press briefing after the auction.

The bellwether 91-day T-bill (91-day) fell 14.5 basis points to settle at only 6.928 percent, as bidders swamped the auction for the short-term government security (T-bill) worth P4.045 billion, or much more than the government's original debt offering of P3 billion for each maturity.

The high volume of bids prompted the Treasury's auction committee to go beyond its scheduled borrowing and accept P3.5 billion worth of tenders.

The 182-day T-bill rate fetched a yield of 7.499 billion or 20.5 basis points lower than last week's figure, also highly oversubscribed by the market, the six-month debt instrument garnered P5.035 billion worth of bids, of which P3 billion was accepted by the government.

The 364-day T-bill rate declined by 17.2 basis points to 8.14 percent. The auction gave the government security enabled it get a win in market response as bids for it reached P7.71 billion. The auction committee accepted P3 billion of the bids.

"The market is very liquid and we don't have other security at the moment," said a trader as he explained the reason behind the huge response to the government's treasury debt offering.

The banks said market liquidity was boosted by the P27 billion in initial treasury bonds that matured last week, after getting the proceeds of these bills, most banks preferred to reinvested in maturing short-term government securities, the said.

The approval of the VAT bill, the traders added, took away the uncertainty in the market.

The market gets the Moody blues

THE PAST year has not been a good one for me. I do not mean ill, naturally. I mean on a personal basis.

After receiving an invitation from Rome, I fancied my chances of becoming the next Pope, but I was eliminated in the first ballot.

I have all the necessary qualifications. I do not drink, smoke, take drugs or eat meat. I do not fall asleep during sermons and I never knowingly do harm to my fellow man. I have never been guilty of a felony or even a Misa Domenical, whose heinous or sexual harassment was thrown out of court.

I came perilously near my top ranking on a one way street when I was 3, but since I could not read, the charge was dismissed. I am married but celibate. My wife's favorite position is back to back. Perhaps that would not be just my cup for an agnostic Pope.

Then there was the matter of the British election last week when Tony Blair was returned for a third term. I had he been defeated, I was about to run for the Conservative Party because the current leader is resigning, and there is no one else with the intelligence and charisma to lead the Party.

Another opportunity went to waste.

I have just been told that I will not be considered for the post of Italian Head because of my age. In the case of Il Duce, Bugsy Siegel went so old that they had to run ambulances at his inauguration.

The most irritating event was that Tiger Woods asked me to partner him in a Senior Senior tournament and then missed the cut, the first time in 7 years, and I had to suffer.

I recently plays with my good friend Tony who has a handicap of 9. Mine is at home.

If you have seen the Phantom of the Opera, a wonderful film, there is a scene where the Phantom comes down a candle driven.

MR. BEARBULL

Ave Arellano

With all those journalists being killed, the Inquirer is promoting all its columnists. They gave me a big, leftwing riot and Prodigio headgear. They equipped me amphibious tricycle with four-cushion suspension and three gun turrets. Those extra 3 arms make me feel extra. Parents tend to 4-wheel.

My wife is pleased that the increase in SSS has been deferred. On 15 January, she can still buy low-VAT milk and fall in love drowning.

Monetary shocks are 30-priority pressure in their time instead of the recommended 20 pounds. This is to allow for inflation.

* * *

LAST Monday, the degree of risk rose to 180, which is two hotter than I am using a short weighted, one moments relieved.

With a Fed indicator, the world not be extraordinary, but for a slow indicator to jump from 0 to 180 in 7 days is almost unheard of. It is like a car going from 0 to 180 mph in 5 seconds. It came out an hour after I arrive in my article, but I told all subscribers to get out of the market and it has fallen every day since then.

It looks as if it will go lower still for several reasons. First of all, I think the SEC bill is totally inadequate as it restricts it to individual but it will cause only P50 billion this year instead of the P400 billion at once the Presidency needs. Secondly, by June year, it will raise P120 billion, but in the meantime, the situation is deteriorating.

The government has just increased foreign debt by another $750 million, plus an additional P7 billion for the black hole known as Napocor. Also, the BIR has missed its target for the third successive month, by much for the hated or missed half.

There are still five more bills to be debated including a switch to a parliamentary system. In the UK, we have had this since 1,954, and it works extremely well—much better than the present bastardized system that gives double fault.

Another reason for the decline in Wall Street where 100 point falls in the DOW are now commonplace. But the news is not all bad. High oil inventories have pushed the price of crude oil below $50 a barrel and the trade deficit shrank from $60 billion in March to $55 billion in April. Oil in crude surplus ranged in $2 1.5 billion fueling speculation that the rates will eventually be realized.

Moody's, which rated this week, a spokesperson for Moody's Investor Services said that the fiscal situation facing the Philippines now is twice as bad as that facing Argentina in 1998, when it defaulted on its obligations.

Regardless of the merits of the statement, it had the effect of unnerving investors, and the Peso plunged 80 points in 5 days. Except for one day, foreign brokers from Hong Kong were net sellers of our stocks for the past 2 months, and the amount they have sold is less a fraction of what they bought in the 9 months preceding the beginning of March.

Another factor to the changes in the weighting of the Morgan Stanley global indices, including the Asia Pacific index. There are numerous mutual funds around the world, which have more than $1 trillion in funds benchmarked to these indices, and they must, once again, adjust their funds there, typically within the changes.

So, if a stock is dropped from the index, all the fund managers will sell it, as the mutual fund benchmark requires it to do so. Likewise, if stocks are added, fund managers have to buy them in order to keep their percentages in tandem. And it's like a big money.

An additional factor is the percentage that each country has in the Asia Index universe. This time around, 113 Asian stocks will be added to the index on May 30. Japan led the region with 39 stocks, including Japan's second largest mobile phone company. This naturally increases the weighting of Japan, as a greater percentage of the portfolio will be invested in that country.

Australia came second with 15 additions representing 40 per cent increase in the industry list. This follows the methodology of using the free-float system instead of capitalization. Taiwan was also increased substantially with industry coverage raised from 270 companies to 300 companies.

China added 11 companies, but this is certain to extend the greatest increase in the years ahead as the country has started privatizing a large number of companies.

South Korea, Indonesia and Malaysia received 3 to 6 each, but the Philippines added only Banco de Oro.

This means that the percentage of Philippine stocks, already tiny, has been reduced by 0.01 percent, and the bias here behind the selling of AC, ALI and BPI, all with large free floats. The selling does not have to be carried on until the end of the month but is already taking its toll.

The PSE should investigate brokers, which has fallen increasingly from P52 to P27, mainly on foreign selling. Surely, the company should make a statement to the shareholders explaining the reason for the fall.

Personally, DMC has dropped from P6.10 to P3.50 because it is largely dependent on bonuses for its income. A statement from DMC would be helpful. (mrbear_bull@hotmail.com)

RP bourse ranks 2nd best in Asia

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange has emerged as the second best performing bourse in Asia as of May 13, growing by 5.4 percent, buoyed by corporate earnings and sub-rupee peso.

The PSE, in a statement, said that it only trailed the exchange in Indonesia, which grew 5.8 percent. The ranking was determined using the percentage change of the composite index year-to-date, or the basket of 30 stocks in the index, in peso terms.

Other bourses that made it among the period were Singapore, which climbed 3.6 percent; South Korea, which was 3.1 percent and Thailand, which advanced 2.2 percent.

On the other hand, four exchanges posted declines in the same time period. Taiwan with 0.6 percent; India, -0.7 percent; Hong Kong, -1.1 percent; and Malaysia, -1.2 percent.

PSE officials, citing data from Bloomberg said the United States, also said the Philippines had the best performing bourse, climbing 9.2 percent as of May 11, followed by South Korea with 6.7 percent, Indonesia with 3.9 percent, Singapore with 3.1 percent, and Thailand 0.7 percent.

It is worst feeling on the Philippine stock market before members of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Industries Inc. Jonathan Ravelo, Board Commissioner last week, Jojo Gonzales, president and head of research at Philippine Equity Partners, said is of prime glow on the back of strong corporate earnings growth, coupled with a strengthening peso.

"It is good to note that the Philippine stock market has continued its performance ... despite the decline in money supply," said PSE president Francis Lim. "But we should not (be content) for complacency."

BRACKETS take advantage of a lull in trade on the floor of the Philippine Stock Exchange in the Ayala Triangle. The local exchange ranked second only to Indonesia, growing by 5.4 percent year to date.

SMC profit growth seen slowing

FOOD and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. expects to post just a slight growth in net earnings in the first quarter, from the P1.79 billion it earned in the same period last year, due mostly to weakness in its beverage operations and onerous revenues hurt by food businesses.

Industry sources said lower sales and food operations took a hit in the first quarter as input energy prices and additional raise even into consumer spending.

At the same time, analysts said SMC would likely book higher financing charges for the year due to its aggressive expansion overseas.

These factors point to a slower profit in the first three months.

In the first quarter last year, net sales rose/down for SMC to P39 billion , up 15 percent due to the strong performance of SMC's domestic and international beer businesses.

SMC is counting on synergies from its acquisition of Coca-Cola Bottling Corp., to boost sales.

Cosmos earlier announced operations to bring in favorable results starting this year, despite the slump in the carbonated beverage industry.

The company embarked last year on "difficult but necessary" programs to secure long-term viability and growth. Cosmos chair Hansen Ang said in a report to the company's stockholders.

"We are optimistic that the initiatives and programs we set in place last year will begin to bring in favorable results in 2005 and beyond," Ang said.

Confronted with mounting operational challenges, Cosmos integrated certain functions to focus on sales and logistics. It consolidated operations in five plants, leading to synergies, lower costs, enhanced product quality and profitability.

Cosmos remained the country's second leading carbonated beverage company. The company's net income rose 8 P192.7 billion in 2004, up 6 percent from P9.9 billion in 2003. Its total assets, meanwhile, reached P11 billion.

From a pre-acquisition level of 11 percent, Cosmos' market share stood up to 22 percent as of end-2004.

Sales revenues, meanwhile, grew from P1.2 billion in 2003 to P1b 7 billion in 2004. Elisabeth L. Sanchez

DISCLOSURES

MYLE Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 1, 3 p.m., at the Magallan Room, Discovery Suites, 25 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Stockholders of record as of April 29 will be entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PICOP Resources Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 29, 2:30 p.m., at the Makati Sports Club, Share 35, Salcedo 105, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of May 27 will be entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

ANGLO Philippine Holdings Corp. postponed its annual stockholders' meeting from May to July 28, and set the record date to May 27. It also announced the appointment of Adrian Ariza as executive vice president, replacing Francisco Navarro, who has retired, and of Raimundo Pingkian as vice president for finance and administration.

* * *

BPI-Commercial Banking Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 27, 4 p.m., at the Antonio Araneta Rotunda Executive Dining Hall, 4/F-G Floor, Pacific Star Building, Makati Ave. cor. Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City. Stockholders of record as of May 30 will be entitled to cast at the meeting.

* * *

LORENZO Shipping Corp. elected Doris Magsaysay Ho and Antonio Louis Montilla as directors, replacing Mariano Nepomuceno and Jeremy Pua, who resigned. *Compiled by Cyril L. Bonanmante, PID Research*

DOF eyes uniform income tax deduction rate

By Michelle V. Bunoz

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance hopes to put a cap on the generous income deductions claimed by corporate and self-employed taxpayers, in a bid to plug revenue leaks and earning from over-declaration of deductions.

According to the DOF, the proposed capping may be done by imposing a uniform rate for taxpayers claiming deductions from their gross income.

Finance Undersecretary Jim Jimenez discussed the DOF's plan yes to determine the capping rate.

Under the income tax system, companies and those self-employed individuals are allowed deductions related expenses to offset gross income to arrive at their net income, which is the basis for computing their income tax liabilities. The DOF said the income earned had been declared, as many taxpayers would declare only a meager amount of taxable income.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue earlier said that, in 2003, some large taxpayers reduced their gross income by as much as 90 percent, therefore reducing the revenue agency to collect income tax based only on their remaining 2 percent income.

Those self-employed in a trade/retail sector income tax returns showed that they declared only a 3.5-percent income tax rate. The corporate income tax rate, however, would soon be increased to 35 percent after Congress passed the bill raising the corporate income tax rate and lifting several other added tax measures.

The need to improve the efficiency in collecting income tax is now pressing. Bonoan said, especially since Congress has already passed the bill raising the corporate income tax rate to 35 percent.

BOC starts ₱1.1-B tier 2 capital offer

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANK of Commerce yesterday started offering ₱1.1 billion worth of tier 2 capital to raise more funds for lending to its market.

"This will immediately strengthen our capital and give us enough funds to either increase lending or pay off high-cost deposits," BOC executive vice president Hanie Padilla said.

The tier 2 offering will raise BOC's capital adequacy ratio to about 14 percent, from 12.4 percent as of end-February.

The offering will consist of unsecured subordinated notes with a tenor of 10 years but callable on the fifth year. It marks the bank's first bond manager, while Multinational Investment Bancorporation is the initial market maker.

A subordinated debt is an obligation that in bankruptcy ranks in the payment of principal and interest to all depositors and creditors of the issuer, except those expressed to rank equally with or behind the holders of subordinated debt. Should the issuer become insolvent, the subordinated debt holder will be paid only after ordinary debts were settled.

BOC's notes will have a minimum denomination of ₱500 million and increments of ₱100,000 beyond the minimum.

The offering was rated by Philratings as PRI A, which means that the bank has an above-average capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other corporations.

Padilla said BOC would not venture into the consumer lending business. It will, instead, stick to its niche market—the middle market composed of medium-sized enterprises with assets of ₱50 million and above.

BOC SVP for wealth management Ricardo Duico said the bank was expecting to expand its lending portfolio by ₱4 billion this year from the ₱20 billion outstanding loans as of end-2004.

"We're focusing on nonbrine industries...services, telecommunication companies, food and canned export industries like [makers of] furniture," Duico said.

"We're shying away from the garments industry," he added.

To avoid over-concentration in a single industry, which is common to lenders that focus on the middle market, BOC has imposed an internal ceiling on lending to each particular industry as well as a cash cap per borrower.

BOC registered a net income after tax before provisions of ₱788.1 million last year compared to ₱625.67 million in 2003.

Its net interest income went up to ₱1.7 from ₱1.2 billion in the same period last year. Its deposits continued to expand, breaking the ₱41.5 billion mark, up from ₱37.3 billion a year ago.

In the first quarter of 2005, Bancommerce posted a net income of ₱180.2 million, up from the previous year's ₱73.1 million. This represented 46 percent of its target for the whole year.

In 2004, the bank invested over ₱200 million and hundreds of hours implementing its new core banking systems, which includes the full automation of the deposit system of its 122 branches nationwide.

4-month BOP surplus rises by 165% to $887M

Turn to page B4

and transfers of goods and services. Any transaction that gives rise to a payment in foreign currency by a Philippine resident, like importation, is a deficit item. Any transaction that gives rise to a receipt of foreign exchange, like exporting, is a surplus item.

The BOP is influenced by the build-up in the GIR, which, in turn, includes the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, special drawing rights from multilateral institutions and foreign investments. The GIR is seen as an indicator of the country's ability to service the foreign exchange requirements of the economy.

Earlier this month, the BSP jacked up its 2005 BOP surplus target by almost 84 percent to $852 million from the earlier forecast of $464 million due to the stronger influx of migrant remittances and foreign portfolio investments.

The move was also influenced by the changes in the BSP's accounting method, which significantly reduced the amount of reserves and remittances.

Under the new methodology, for instance, a 20-percent netting factor was included in OFW remittances to estimate remittances outside the banking system. The BSP is expecting OFW remittances to hit at least $9.6 billion this year, further increasing from the all-time high record of $8.5 billion in 2004. The earlier forecast was much more conservative at $8.6 billion.

With the new accounting method, OFWs are now split into the following categories: residents (income accounts) and non-residents (current transfers).

There was likewise an adjustment in import data to correct the underassessment of consigned raw materials for electronics, thereby providing a better representation of the electronics industry that is more import-dependent than what was suggested by the old numbers.

The *Executives' Meeting of East Asia and Pacific Central Banks* (EMEAP Group)
which comprises 11 central banks and monetary authorities
in the East Asia and Pacific region, namely:

Reserve Bank of Australia, People's Bank of China
Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Bank Indonesia
Bank of Japan, Bank of Korea
Bank Negara Malaysia, Reserve Bank of New Zealand
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Monetary Authority of Singapore
and Bank of Thailand

has engaged the

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BPI ASSET MANAGEMENT

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ABF Philippines Bond Index Fund
under the Asian Bond Fund 2

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DOTC, Yang group ink deal on Caticlan airport

By Clarissa S. Bados

A GROUP of investors led by businessman George Ty has signed an agreement with the Department of Transportation and Communications to upgrade the Caticlan airport near Boracay Island.

Sources said Ty's group, called Caticlan Airport Corp., would first conduct a feasibility study to determine whether renovating the Boracay airport to put it in par with international standards would be a viable investment opportunity.

If viable, the DOTC officials said the government could give Yang's group an "original proponent status" to develop the Caticlan airport also known as the Godofredo P. Ramos airport.

The source that the Yang group would get first crack at the project.

But since the project proposal was unsolicited, the government would still have to allow other parties to submit a superior bid. But the original proponent will have the right to match any offer.

Part of the group's plan was to extend the runway to accommodate larger airplanes and to put up a direct airport terminal.

Currently, only small aircraft operated by Southeast Asian Airlines and Asian Spirit fly outright to Caticlan to bring tourists to and from Boracay.

Bigger airplanes would have to fly to Kalibo, Aklan, about an hour and a half away from Caticlan.

Piotr Caticlan, however, can take a 20-minute ferry boat ride to the island renowned for its powder white sand and sparkling blue waters.

Yang owns Jollibee Airlines Inc. subsequent Corp., the owner franchisee of the McDonald's fast food chain.

The Supreme Court was reportedly in talks to acquire one of the specialty resorts in Boracay to cash in on the increasing number of tourists going to Boracay.

The Tay Transportation Office originally planned to extend the runway of the Caticlan airport to accommodate bigger aircraft.

The project would cover the extension of runway from 839 meters by 30 meters by 950 meters by 30 meters, as well as the rejuvenation of the apron, construction of a perimeter fence, and renovation of the terminal building.

However, however, said that the ATO project was unsufficient if the government wanted to accommodated bigger aircraft and attract more tourists to Boracay.

Smart, Sun get more frequencies

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission has granted additional frequencies to Smart Communications Inc. and Sun Cellular to accommodate their network expansion.

The NTC reported that the 2nd broadcasts available at the 1800 MHz frequency for cellular phone operators was divided evenly between the two companies.

The NTC decided to equally divide the bandwidth to ease tensions between the two companies, which were latently fighting over the additional frequencies.

It said the NTC took that a case to act on the issue, indicating how divisible a way for the regulator to secure at a solution that would benefit both carriers.

Smart had applied for additional frequency allocation as early as March 2003, while Digital Telecommunications Phils.'s Inc. sought the 1900 in December 2003.

Sun Cellular is the third arm of Digital Mobile Phils. Inc. a unit of listed firm Digital.

The NTC considered that under the 1800 MHz frequency, each the remaining 5 MHz slot, Smart of would have 17.5 MHz while Sun Cellular has 10 MHz.

Globe Telecom Inc., meanwhile, has 12.5 MHz under the same frequency.

Smart pointed out that it has the biggest subscriber base and thus, would need the biggest frequency allocation to deliver quality service to its 20.2 million customers as of the first quarter.

Sun Cellular, on the other hand, said its customer base was growing rapidly due to the popularity of the 24/7 unlimited calls, that would require additional as quote additional as /Narrow ways support.

Sun Cellular ended the first quarter with 2.7 million subscribers. Globe has 12.9 million.

Smart experts to end the year with 23 million subscribers. The NTC said the existing 5 MHz would be the last frequency available under the conventional digital wireless systems.

The next available frequencies were set aside for third generation wireless operations in 3G, which the NTC would like to hold on the year.

Gerard S. Bados

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MINIS with mixed results /C4

LIFESTYLE

Editor: Chris Bacal-Fortman

World-class medical care for Pinoys

QUALITY care at AMEH not only means the latest equipment but also compassion for patients.

By Anne A. Jardaleza

WHEN THE ASIAN Hospital and Medical Center (AHMC) opened three years ago, it set a new standard in hospital and medical care in the country.

Its sleek, cyber modern facade and state-of-the-art facilities redefined quality medical service and patient care, prompting other hospitals to make long overdue upgrades.

Not one to rest on its laurels, the Asian Hospital Inc. takes another step in ensuring quality medical care for Filipinos by forging a partnership with International SOS, the manager/owner company of Southeast Asia's largest private hospital, Mount Elizabeth Hospital.

The partnership will result in international standard management upgrades and accreditation, high-tech information systems, updated medical technology and equipment, excellent research facilities, improved organizational infrastructures.

Medical tourism

The Bangkok-based Bumrungrad is almost single-handedly responsible for the booming medical tourism in Thailand, treating one million patients annually from more than 100 countries.

"We are more Middle Eastern patients than any other hospital outside the Middle East. This is a question of looking at a market and finding what patients want. I think we can do the same in the Philippines," says Gavin J. Schneider, IH group chief executive officer and vice chair of Asian Hospital Inc.

Until 18 years ago, Thailand was not a center for healthcare in Southeast Asia. But now, through Bumrungrad's three operating theaters and a network of 33 overseas offices around the globe, the hospital books over 50 cosmetic surgeries a week from Sydney, Australia alone.

Redirecting

In fact, Schneider is considering redirecting some patients in the AHMC because of the dramatic rise in demand.

But first, he says, the AHMC has to be prepared and must make it easy for international patients to come to the Philippines. In Bangkok, for instance, patients are welcomed at the

WORLD-CLASS /2

GOD'S LITTLE FLOWER

St. Therese of Lisieux, France
(January 2, 1873–September 30, 1897)

Today, May 13, is the 80th anniversary of St. Therese's canonization by Pope Pius XI in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome. Her followers were bestowed an unshakable confidence in God and an absolute love of Him.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

St. Therese grew up in an affectionate family; one that understood the value of love and warmth inside the home, where quarrels were an unwelcome and disagreeable event. It allowed each member to flourish freely. She was the youngest of five daughters. There was a very Catholic family, going to Mass at an early age regularly, receiving the sacraments, and said the Angelus was a regular part of their conversations. Two of her sisters, Marie and Therese, entered the Carmelite convent. The long after, she followed suit.

GOD'S "LITTLE FLOWER"

At fifteen, she entered the convent because she devotedly wanted to be a nun. This novel childlike request that surprised even the hardest nuns about having a relationship with God. She spoke of the spiritual life as if it were like plucking petals off a flower and answering them. Before leave "I like flowers" was a name she gave herself, aptly describing her relationship with God. Her confessions are evident: verily, the fruit's will of God. When the indomitable death came, God suffered. She wanted to experience their kind of suffering. She never imposed sentences or hardships on herself but never refused pain. To her, suffering was a sign of God's love. And she wanted to be united with Jesus.

GREAT SUFFERING

She took suffering with extraordinary patience, all the while viewing pains about God and heaven. She also was not without her struggles and doubts about faith. Her mother died when she was 4. She was also joined her sisterhood, left home to enter the Carmelite convent. Her father suffered a stroke and lost his reason. She was attacked with tuberculosis when member she is even more astounded. Her last months were a veritable hell. Through all this, her writing poetry was a promising testimonies by saying it is a way of loving God's purpose. She died at the tender age of 24. Her last words were, " Oh I love Him! My God I love you."

HER "LITTLE WAY"

Her "little way" or spiritual childhood" is based on complete and unshakeable confidence in God's love as mankind. Within this framework, she felt as there is more reason for one sins and realizes that God's love is never little. God's love for us must be reciprocated in our capacity to love Him in our own little ways. She referred to this practice, as repeat deed in the context of sacrifice. Yet, found a most certain passage in the book of Proverbs that says it well: "Whoever is a little one come to me. let him come to me."

A SHRINE IN HER HONOR

Next a phase of cooperation with "Therese so we in time, in completion with the help of the saints in the Philippines. It's an initiative by the sisters of devotion to the saint in Iloilo Order devotees and those who want tokens of remembrance for their departed love ones can also help build the shrine by buying a stall in the St. Therese of the Child Jesus Columbarium within the shrine. The Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus will be open to the public by the first quarter of 2009.

For more information on how you can help build the Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, call Magnificat Marketing Corporation at tel. nos. 535-4085/ 635-4482, 635-4475, 810-6259 cm tel. no. 810-6260, mobile no. 0917-5-890-442, e-mail address at Level 22, Fullerton Corporate Center, 1550 cor. Arnaiz Ave., Ex. 1200 Or visit the Shrine's website www.allaboutthemass.com.

Magnificat's Jazz a Vault Away, Help Build a Shrine Proms A Truly Worthwhile Cause

By the first quarter of 2009, Journey of St. Therese of the Child Jesus will have spoken of veneration for the saint as well as an ideal place of remembrance for those departed loved ones. The Shrine features an elegant and solemn columbarium for keeping alive the memories of the dearly departed, completing of the Shrine to made possible through the sale of its units.

To timely and timely establishment units from Magnificat Marketing Corporation, you can help to build the Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus. The shrine is dedicated to the Filipino Family but anybody wishing may be [illegible] EXCLUSIVE DEVELOPER'S MARKETING Terms. Payment terms and current valuations with current accounts as well as new buyers can join the raffle promo.

Those who want to participate at this celebration in order and buy a columbarium unit may just either in cash or by installments [illegible] 0917-5-890-442 or 635-4482, 635-4475, 810-6259 cm tel. no. 810-6260, mobile no. 0917-5-890-442, with addresses at Level 22, Fullerton Corporate Center, 1550 cor. Arnaiz Ave., Ex. 1200. Or visit the Shrine's website www.allaboutthemass.com.

For inquiries, contact Magnificat Treasury Corporation, tel. nos. 535-4085/ 635-4475, approx. 0.0%, fax no. 687-4477, cm tel. no. 810-6259, mobile no. 0917-5-890-442, or visit them at Level 22nd Floor, Fullerton Corporate Center, 1550 cor. Arnaiz Avenue, Ex. 1200. You may also check out their website at www.allaboutthemass.com.

TEAM SEXFISH. Dominic and Joanne Primero with Pixie Clouds

BEAUTIFUL TWOSOME. Hong Kong-based David Jacob with gorgeous Bianca Zobel

MODELS Brent Javier and Nicole Hernandez

CELEWHITE with his southern belle, Hanna Yeo

JOEY Boyce and Alicia Mayer

COOL. Mica Taylor and Kaiya Santos

NICOLE de Castro and Gabbie dela Rama

Fishy expedition in Boracay

ADDICTED TO SMARTI Bengy Manasse with his girl Gracea Cadness, Tim Yap and Diana Cadness

BORACAY is best known for paintings.

But the first time in the history of the country's party scene, but team Bigfish led by super cool, beautiful party couple, Dominic Primero and his wife, sensation beauty queen Joanne Quintero and partner, vivacious Pixie Clouds (who is smiling again), with the full support of Smart Communications, threw three awesome, well-attended bashes on two consecutive weekends.

Here was the final Boracay fiesta (bonfire with live performances by world-renowned fire-eaters Thomas Quintero and Mike Vivo, our men, upended on beach mattresses and throw pillows in front of the ornamental Wall of Pacific Ocean, enjoying the divine ambiance while watching the famous Boracay sunset.

Several beautiful people joined in from abroad like must-to-avoid lovebirds, missile man Thomas Quintero and Miss Universe veteran entry/beauty Elaine Matawaran from Prague; GUCCI David Jacob from Hong Kong with gorgeous Bianca Zobel; ex-pro basketball player Cal White from California, with Bengay money Barcelo's super benefactress, Marissa Pelaez, with artists Ronald Puno, Alba Encarnacion, Kiko Rustom and Armed Cristobal, with fun fun Ann Jun Poblador.

Two days later, it was Friday 'fear it', paintings, as the headliners of the hottest place to see and be seen in, Hey Jude!, march. Dance music was provided by emcee-in-ground runners Gokongwei and Scary Mac! with our very own DJ Erwin Edrolin. Slinky, the event rounded and always the last bash to finish, has been rocking the island for four straight years now. Some 2000 of the country's party animals stranded, a fine mix of bohemians/indigenes.

At the HEP area were SMART's main man, Bay Montano, with David Nugent, wife and two beauties, Anna Angara and Addie Mylle resident Roxanne Pelaez.

Round the clock rockin'

Back and rolling on the beach were my superb pal Tim Yap, paintings, Boom Jacobe and Nicole Hernandez, dancing till 9 a.m. Sunday were Bigfish's super pals and die-hard followers Raj Bhavnani, Jerry Tiongson, Sergy Hontoria, with gorgeous sister Ivy, Ormeta and Diana Cadness; DJ Mandel Davis; PJ Castro; Martin Ledesma; Ige Cruz; and adorable girls Anna Martha Bhavnani and vivacious Giselle Sityar.

Still on dazed time were housemates Jane and Tim Montano, Miss Bacolod Ann Southern; post Grand de la Paz and her lady love, eye-catching Tanya Montano; the Fourth-to-none, facile and luminous, award-winning film director Joey Reyes; and, wait, with everyone's favorite interior designer, Bernie Mendoza.

One week after Slinky was first Knell, again at the beachfront of Hey Jude, featuring DJ Andy Norman of Team Knell, with our top local spin doctors, Wendell Garcia and Erwin Edrolin, for Team Bigfish.

This time around, the crowd was more of the "mostachos, mess is and dinner-chat" variety though they did not mind partying again. Some guests had skipped the first week, others did not leave at all, and many came back just for the party. So there they were, dynamic as our party scene, dancing to the smooth, sexy and soulful Fred Knell sounds...hand-some Arlo owner Ace Elizalde with gorgeous girlfriend Princess Senarez, "it" boy gals, fashion guru Celine Lopez and hyper-active Just Shop brand figure-ist, Shendale's Priscila Prados, and delicious-looking model Coco Sevilla.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alice Van Hagen using Radiak Kitsch lens

The super happy Hey Jude! owner, well-liked Jude Lee, runs here, there and everywhere, rapping with never-say-die boys Derrick Drandriana, Paolo Peleio, Manuel Crespo, JP Bautista, Ash Bitpart, Nikki Romero and Judge Primero, with Bigfish and my favorite babes, gorgeous Sarah Antipas, Heather Gil, Jessica Encinares and Mary Jaeha.

What makes Bigfish parties would-class? According to the gang of three mega fishes, Dominic, Joanne and Pixie, "It's because of our undying passion for dance music, love of family and friends, loyalty to sponsors, propers-to-scrap, and the right sound system."

Yes, paintgate, way to go.

Radioness checklist

While on a beach in Dominoes, my friend and I talked about how many male persons there are around. During the animated discussion, we came up with the ten-nes of good breeding. Check this out:

Basket questions:

1. How old are you? Nine (but is really nine, paintgate). Never ask that unless you are a hospital receptionist.

2. Did you have a nose job? It's not only male. It's not only the persons indeed.

3. You gained weight? You have to be real close to the person to ask this, di baka?

THOMAS Quintero and his girlfriend, Elaine Matawaran

MARTIN Ledesma with Jay DJ Mandel, Sheila and musician Giselle Sityar

JUDE Lee, main man of Hey Jude, the hottest bar to see and be seen in

DJ GRAND Hauser Sues Mac

COOL style Dinna Arellano

RONALD Puno with Astrud Cristobal, Kiko Rustom and Mermon Cristobal

POPULAR DJs. Wendell Garcia, Andy Norman and Erwin Edrolin

CHILLING. JM Rodriguez with Judge Primero and polo player Chuang Yeo

THE FAB Flipside

SOUTHERN gent Quad dela Paz with honeymooners Joan and Tim Montano, but PJ Castro and eye-catching Tanya Montano

4. How much is your salary? What do you care? It's none of your business, unless you're with the BIR.

5. Who is going in the party? It is already an honor to be invited. Who cares who else is going?

6. Are you gay? That's the biggest turn-off for a straight person, duhhuyo.

7. Are you sure you credited this? That's downright insulting—you're insinuating the host while eating his/her food.

8. How much did you pay for that dress? Why do you want to know? Are you going to buy it?

9. Some starters ask before going to a press conference, "Is there an envelope? Is there a host?" Well thank goodness they are in the minority and they know who they are.

10. Asking a well-dressed young man, "Are you a B.U.?" A chick who was asked that almost dobbered the jaden.

11. How come you still don't have children? You don't only make the person feel insecure, but depressed, too. That is a major no-no.

12. Who bored? Guess...five probably did it, but wanted to throw suspicion on someone else.

Those you have it. Are you guilty of these "crimes" or know somebody who is? Well, paintgate, I know many who make the list.

Archbishop favors contraception

CONTRARY to what most Filipinos think, not all members of the Catholic clergy agree with the Vatican's stand against artificial birth control or contraception.

The Rev. Thomas Roberts, S.J., an American archbishop, who once worked with Amnesty International, first came out openly in favor of contraception under certain circumstances.

In his paper "Contraception and Sin," one of the chapters of the book Objections to Roman Catholicism published in 1901 just before Vatican II, Archbishop Roberts wrote:

"I repeat what I have said in various places over a period of years, that I have not been persuaded by the 'natural law' arguments against contraception. It does not seem to me to be conclusive, and if I were not a Catholic, I would probably be tempted to say on the grounds of reason alone to accept the position taken by the Lambeth Conference, namely that there are cases where conscientious reflection on the matter by husband and wife might lead to the conclusion that contraception was the only way to save, preserve and sanctify a given marriage."

The Lambeth Conference that Rev. Roberts referred to declared that "in the grounds of reason alone one cannot affirm contraception to be always intrinsically evil." An intrinsic evil means that, by its very nature, it is evil. And this action is contraception.

Alienated

The hardline stance of the Catholic Church on artificial birth control has alienated many of the faithful. In this country, the ultra-conservative position has made it extremely difficult for the government to pass legislation that would rein in the galloping population growth that has stifled our economy.

The problem is compounded by the intolerance of the local Catholic hierarchy to participate in a public debate on the issue, to the point that it exhibits a priviledged and pontifical fear of being questioned by the people.

But as the Rev. Roberts pointed out, "It is necessary that the Church should offer convincing reasons for its position, for it is precisely the Church that insists on reason as the basis of its condemnation of contraception."

The Archbishop asserts the Catholic position is difficult to maintain, "precisely because it is based on natural law." He says the position, in effect, "assumes that natural law can only be clearly known by Catholics, in which case it has very little to offer other Christians," and consequently makes "nonsubjects" highly suspect.

Without question

In the Philippines, the government takes the Church stand on contraception almost without question for fear of political repercussions, despite the consensual permission of legislation of Church and state. And despite devastating consequences on population growth.

It is good therefore that a courageous and thinking Catholic archbishop should oppose the Church's untenable position on the subject. He has no votes to lose, nor any political constituency to please.

Archbishop Roberts also criticized the outmoded or antiquated teaching of the Catholic Church on human sexuality. He said, "The present Catholic view on sexuality is in an Augustinian stage, because it does not take into account the whole panorama of today's developments in power of sexual union. The whole purpose of human sexuality is not to produce as many children as possible, it is to produce as many children as can be brought up to lead a happy and fruitful life; and the whole purpose of marriage must be seen in this light."

Why can't the Catholic Church apply the same strictures and uncompromising stand on contraception to sexual abuses of women and children by some members of the clergy? Why is it so quick to condemn contraception as evil and yet so slow, ever reluctant, to investigate and condemn priests' sexual abuses? Isn't because contraception is considered to be "against natural law" but sexual abuse is not?

Change

But nothing is static in this world. Even traditional Church doctrines have changed throughout the centuries. And, as pointed out by Archbishop Roberts, "Just as contemporary theological opinion gives an evidently different meaning to the word 'church' than that which it had in the 16th century, so too it is not impossible that the classical concept of 'nature' will be revised in the future."

The book "Objections to Roman Catholicism" was written by eight Catholic writers whose devotion to their faith is beyond question. It has sold more copies than expected, according to its editor. And since the book was published in 1966, the same zeal work of Archbishop Roberts, S.J. has become widely known.

Hopefully the book will be updated or at least reprinted to encourage honest and intelligent discussion of contraception concerning Catholicism.

Address letters to this column to Prisca Pleno (*Ms Leguup*) is... Legaspi Village, Makati City. Call 8187245 or 8926000 for information on seminars I conduct. E-mail: *priscapleno@excel.com.ph* or visit http://www.*priscapleno.blogspot.com*. Listen to my AM radio program, 7-8 p.m., every Sunday.

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime T. Licauco

FACILITIES comparable to those in deluxe hotels will be important in drawing foreign clients.

REATHERHEAD Lawrence Schoch and Bumrungrad will result in, among others, updated medical technology and equipment and excellent research facilities.

World-class medical care . . .

From page C1

airport, booked in a hotel and brought to the hospital. The hospital even helps facilitate the issuance of visa for some nationalities.

"We have experience in building both areas. For the first time, the Philippines has designed a facility that can appeal to foreign patients. We can eventually have the formula for some serious success here, and make the AMHC not only the No. 1 most popular hospital here but a new hub for the Asia-Pacific region," Schroeder says.

He says the AMHC already has the best doctors and nurses and superb focus on patient and service, the most essential elements Bumrungrad broke for in forging partnerships, and what make people—local and foreign—want to come back.

What's needed is correct marketing scheme and organizational restructure. The AMHC has to make the preparations unveiled to become the country's first fully automated hospital through a software called Hospital 2000.

Automated

Fully automated means faster registration of patients, making their medical records electronic so their information is readily available to their doctors in one database, eliminating the need to search physically for test results—old and recent—in various departments of the hospital.

Even X-rays will become digital. That, says Schroeder, provides a better "baseline for world-class medicine.

"While the method may be highly efficient and quick, Schroeder says there is no standard formula for success, no "cookbook" on how to run hospitals. Health care is still very much a local product, very specific for each country.

The new AMHC board of directors will have to look into what is appropriate for the Philippines and Filipinos.

"We have done this many, many times over the last 20 years. What we bring are the right elements to put it all together," he says.

Bumrungrad has what Schroeder refers to as the Dream Team of international health care management, each bringing 10 to 30 years of experience to running hospitals in Europe, Asia, Australia, Singapore, Thailand, the United States, Canada and New Zealand.

Dennis Brown, group chief operating officer of BI, will head the management committee of AHMC for three months to help get things started. This is the first time an international management company has been actively involved in a hospital in the country.

"The most important person in the hospital is the patient. They are our priority, but in order to provide best quality care a hospital should be financially viable. A hospital has to be run like a business, with compassion. The people from Bumrungrad Int'l. are experts in striking that delicate balance," says the AHMC founding chair Dr. Jorge Garcia.

Garcia, a world-class, well-respected cardiovascular surgeon with an impressive list of patients, has practiced medicine in Washington, DC for the last 30 years, occasionally coming back to the Philippines. From his experience, he says, Filipinos still have the most genuine concern for the well-being of their patients.

"You don't have to go to the worst-run world to get medical care. We can do it right here. The patient being treated in the AHMC gets much better medical care than patients in the US and that is a fact," Garcia says.

E-mail the author at ajumbero@inquirer.com.ph

DENNIS Brown, BI Group COO; Curtis Schroeder, BI Group CEO; Vicente Ayllon, AHB chair; and Dr. Jorge Garcia, AHB founding chair

Minis can have max effects

From page C4

Southwest Missouri University research found that adults 18-45 reduced triglyceride levels 27 percent by performing multiple 10-minute sessions of "fast walking or jogging very slowly."

Thomas Altena, co-author of the study said, "If we can get people to run short bouts of exercise to work up to an hour 30 minutes of activity on most days, we can not only help them lower fat levels in their blood but also help them improve their overall health."

Last year, the American Heart Association cited a Harvard School of Public Health study, which found that two 15-minute exercise daily were as effective as a single 30-minute session in reducing the risk of heart disease.

Even 2 to 5-minute sessions can be effective if done often enough to accumulate 30 minutes. A 1999 study published in Preventive Health discovered that sedentary young women improved their cardiovascular health and body compositions by doing multiple two-minute sessions of stair climbing daily.

Little things count

If you can't record and keep track of how many minutes you exercise in a day, at least try to stand and walk more often than you sit.

A Mayo Clinic study used a cyclometer originally developed by the United States Air Force for jet pilots. Men and overweight patients were made to wear special underwear that recorded their movements every half-second continuously for 24 hours for ten days.

It was discovered that even slightly people sat about 580 minutes more per day than lean people, as they were burning 350 fewer calories. Head researcher James Levine calculated that if overweight people would just move more, they could lose 15 pounds in a year.

He said, "A person can expend calories either by going to the gym, or through everyday activities. Our study shows that the calories that people burn in their everyday activities are far, far more important in obesity than we previously imagined."

Visit www.lifeandfitness.info

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Flat oblique curl on stability ball

STRENGTHENS the abdominal muscles, particularly the oblique muscles that criss-cross the waist.

Equipment:
Stability ball

Exercise technique:

1. Start by sitting on the ball with your legs hip-width apart.
2. Slowly lower yourself into a flat position by walking your feet forward while you simultaneously lean backwards.
3. Once the ball is behind your lower back, place your hands behind your head. This is the starting position.
4. Diagonally curl your upper body bringing the bottom of your ribcage towards the opposite hipbone.
5. Return to the starting position.
6. Do the desired number of repetitions on the same side, then do the other side.

Performance tips:

1. Exhale as you diagonally curl across. Inhale as you unroll.
2. Place your fingers lightly at the sides of your head instead of clasping your hands to avoid pulling on your neck.
3. Avoid bringing your elbow across your face. Focus on rotating at the waist.
4. If you find the flat position too difficult, try the incline diagonal curl.
5. An easier variation is to do the exercise sitting on a stability ball.

Repetitions:
12-15 repetitions

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Minis can have max effects

CAN'T find the time to exercise? You are not alone. It is among the top reasons given by people who don't work out.

Though some are just using it as an excuse, such really and busy work schedules, there really are people who want to get fit but don't have the time.

The current fitness recommendation is cardiovascular or aerobic exercise for 30-60 minutes at least three times a week, resistance training exercise for 20 minutes at least twice a week, and stretching exercises two to three times a week.

This can be "mission impossible" for someone with a nine-to-five job who has to battle the rush hour to and from work. Luckily, research has discovered that several short exercise sessions can be as beneficial as continuous exercise.

WELL AND GOOD

Dhvee Javier

This week, I'll give scientific proof. Next week, practical guidelines for designing your own mini-workout program.

Research

In a Stanford University study, two groups did 30-minutes-worth of exercise several times a week. The first group did 20 minutes continuously while the second did three 10-minute sessions morning, afternoon and evening. The results were the same for both—improved fitness levels.

Sedentary middle-aged individuals participated in a three-week study at the University of Virginia. They did 75 10-minute sessions per week (equivalent to two and a half hours of exercise per week) of walking, stretching and lightweight lifting.

They were able to improve aerobic fitness by 15.20 percent, increase strength and muscular endurance by 46-100 percent, lower cholesterol levels by 11 points, and lose an average of three pounds.

Most remember them (minor info the short exercise sessions "sparks." He says even people who don't like to exercise respond positively to sporadic sparks because they don't feel like they are working out. The findings inspired him to write, "The Spark: The Revolutionary Three-Week Fitness Plan."

Gaesser writes, "The No. 1 reason that people cite for not exercising is lack of time. This research shows that you don't have to sweat and spend lots of time exercising to become significantly healthier. All aspects of fitness, (especially strength and flexibility can be addressed) with short, double-bouts of exercise."

In a 2002 University of Illinois study, people who took regular short brisk walks reduced fat, lowered blood pressure, reduced their risk of heart disease and had less anxiety.

At the Cooper Institute for Aerobic Research, overweight sedentary individuals who increased their physical activity during their daily routine got the same results in terms of fitness, blood pressure and body fat as people who did 20-60 minutes of vigorous exercise several times a week in the gym.

Researchers at the Johns Hopkins University found that individuals who did as many 10-minutes of physical activity like taking the stairs instead of the elevator lost almost 7.8 pounds at the end of the 16-week study.

Scientists at the University of Pittsburgh put a group of distinctly obese women (30-75 pounds above normal weight) on three different exercise programs. All groups exercised for 40 minutes daily.

The first group did a continuous session. The other two did four 10-minute sessions but one had access to exercise equipment like a treadmill in their homes. The most successful achievers in the program and weight loss) was the group that did mini-workouts with the exercise equipment.

So if you have a treadmill or stationary bike at home that is gathering cobwebs, put it back into active duty without doing long exercise sessions.